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Kenya: the return of tribal animosities

Harry der Nederlanden

Given the extreme partisanship on both sides prior to the recent elections and the charges by the opposition that the government was going to rig the polls, many journalists did expect some violent demonstrations. But the scale and ferocity of the violence took almost everyone by surprise.

In many ways since the Mau-Mau troubles of the 50s and independence in 1963, Kenya has served as a model of a former colony finding its way to democratic government and stability. Almost all other African countries reverted to strong-man rule or worse after achieving independence.

Gerard Prunier, professor at the University of Paris, who has written several books about Africa, describes a combination of factors that made this election especially explosive.

Looking back to the years before independence, Prunier points out that the vast majority of the Mau-Mau rebels (called terrorists at the time) were from the Kikuyu tribe. Jomo Kenyatta, the leader of the rebels who became the country's first (president/ prime minister?), was also Kikuyu. Under Kenyatta's long leadership, the country achieved stability, but all the power and wealth gradually accrued to his fellow tribesmen and to two much smaller related tribes. At that time these tribes made up about 30 percent of the population.

Mwai Kibaki

Raila Odinga

Kenya has 40 tribes, each with a strong identity. At present the percentages are approximately as follows: Kikuyu 22, Lubya 14, Luo 13, Kalenjin 12, with the rest of the 40 groups filing out the remaining 39 percent. The incumbent President Kibaki is Kikuyu and the challenger Raila Odinga is Luo.

Under Kenyatta the Luo tribe attempted unsuccessfully to challenge the privileged position of the Kikuyu. They were unable to make an alliance with the Luyba tribe, which took a wait and see attitude.

This changed under Kenyatta's successor, Arap Moi, appointed by Kenyata, but from one of the smaller tribes, the Kalenjin. The idea was to create greater balance, but Moi succeeded in dividing the Kikiyu and enlarging the power of his own tribe.

This was possible in part because the Kikiyu were greatly resented by the other tribes. After independence, they played the role of martyr, because almost all those killed in the Mau-Mau years were Kikiyu. They claimed priority in repossessing "lands stolen by the whites." In the process, they staged a huge land grab of territories that once belonged to other tribes.

In Prunier's account, the earliest elections in Kenya (1992 and 1997) were basically state-managed affairs that pitted various tribes against each other to keep Arap Moi in power. He ruled the country for 24 years.

In the 2002 elections the candidates of the two main parties were both Kikuyu. Mwai Kibaki was seen as the candidate of change and hope – hope that the country's wealth would be distributed more equitably.

Under his leadership Kenya has prospered economically. But corruption continued and most of the wealth continued to go to the Kikuyu. Meanwhile, crime has risen steeply in urban areas. Ethnic groups (tribes) in different areas have resorted to battles over land. And a group that is a cross between a sect and a gang has been terrorizing the poor in the slums and extorting money from them.

The leader of the opposition in this election, Raila Odinga, often portrayed as a champion of democracy in this election over against Kibaki, has played on the frustration and anger. He has played the tribal card (the Kikuyu have stolen everything); the political betrayal card (Kibaki didn't deliver the promised change in power); the social fear card (he has allowed crime to get out of control); and the economic card (all the prosperity is going to the few).

None of the lections in Africa (or in North America, for that matter) are without problems, often because the mechanisms for registering voters are far from perfect in developing countries. There is always a certain level of corruption as well, but if all sides engage in it equally, the thought is that they tend to cancel one another out.

The parliamentary elections on Dec. 27 went fairly smoothly and

See **Kenya** *on page 2*

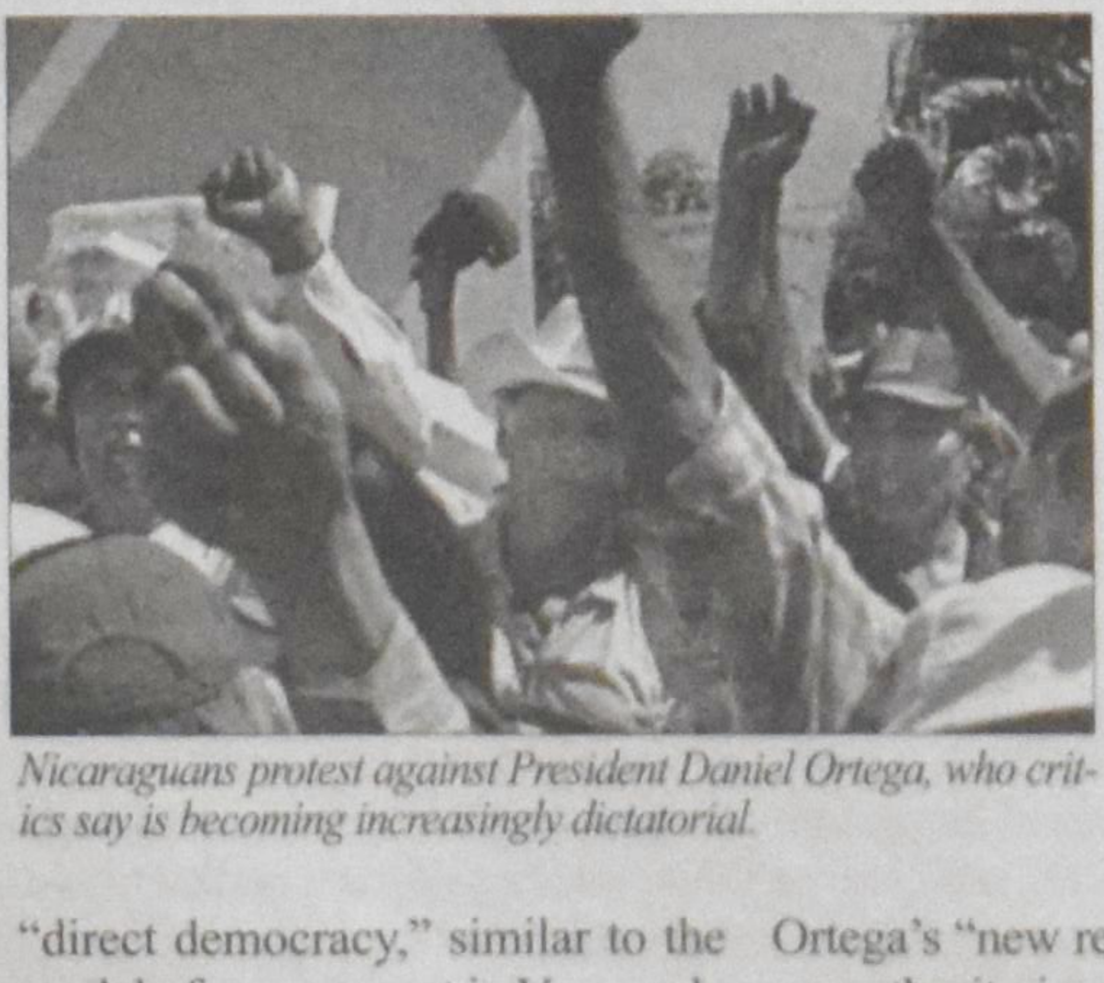
Nicaraguan opposition resists Chávez's expanding 'revolution'

Some lawmakers say that President Ortega is taking a page from the Venezuelan leader's playbook to expand his own presidential powers.

Tim Rogers | Correspondent of
The Christian Science Monitor

Managua, Nicaragua – Emboldened by the recent defeat of the constitutional referendum to expand Hugo Chávez's "21st-century socialist revolution" in Venezuela, the opposition in Nicaragua has started to organize against what it claims is President Daniel Ortega's similar intentions to consolidate power in this country.

Mr. Ortega, an ally of Venezuela's president, has promised to implement his own version of "direct democracy," similar to the model of government in Venezuela and Cuba.



Nicaraguans protest against President Daniel Ortega, who critics say is becoming increasingly dictatorial.

The ex-Marxist leader, whose first Sandinista government battled US-backed contras in the 1980s, has promised that his government will deepen the country's democracy by "sharing the powers" of his presidency with the poor people through the creation of Councils of Citizen Power (CPCs). Opponents, however, claim that behind the rhetoric of Ortega's "new revolution in peace" are authoritarian pretensions similar to those of Chávez.

"As Venezuela showed us, unity and organization is the only thing that can defeat the dictatorship,"

See **Nicaragua** *on page 3*

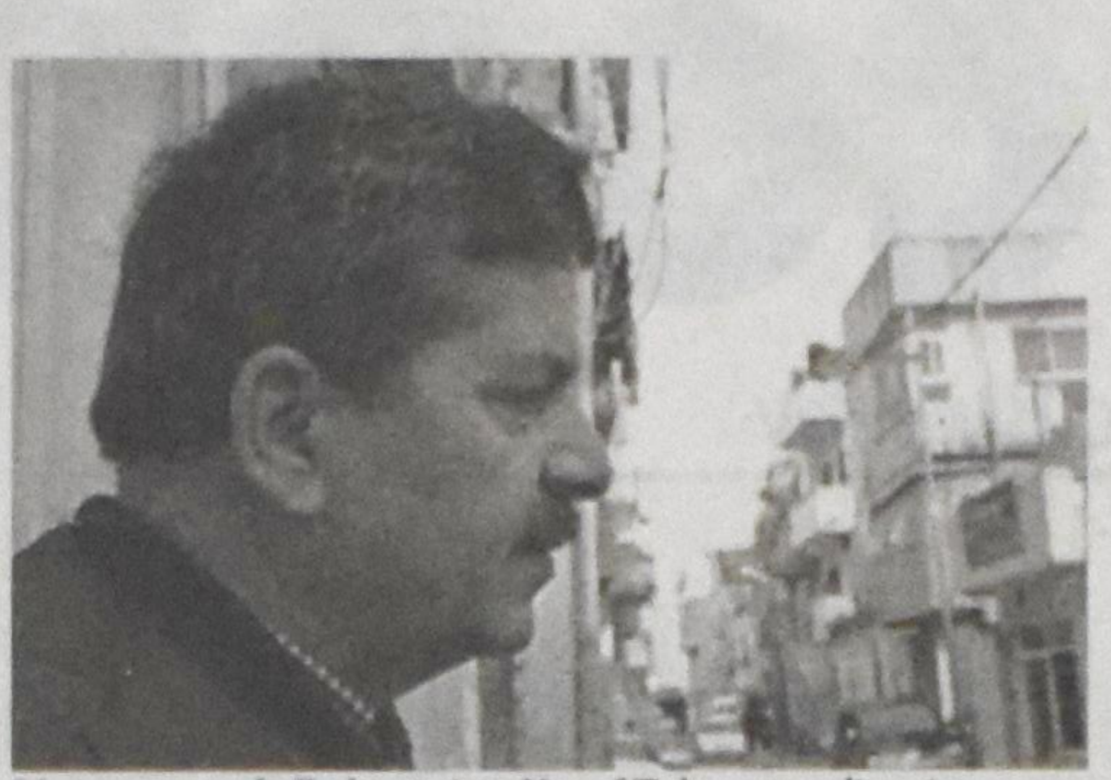
News

Palestinians little moved by Bush visit

In the Shuafat refugee camp in Jerusalem, residents say that Israeli interests will trump theirs despite Bush's vow of a peace deal this year.

Ilene R. Prusher | Staff writer & Joshua Mitnick | Correspondent

JERUSALEM and Ramallah, West Bank (CSM) – While President Bush stood in Ramallah Thursday speaking of plans for a way out of the conflict that defines daily life for millions of Palestinians, many of the people he hoped to convince that a peace deal with Israel is on the horizon simply dismissed his promises as kalam fadi – empty words.



Unimpressed: Palestinian Yusef Taha, standing in Jerusalem's Shuafat Refugee Camp Thursday, said he didn't watch Bush and Abbas's meeting on TV.

Ramallah: The West Bank city that is home to the Palestinian seat of government was largely shut down during President Bush's visit.

Not far from the Palestinian Authority offices where Mr. Bush met President Mahmoud Abbas, men sat huddled at a popular local cafe watching the two stand side by side for the first time on Palestinian soil.

"For us, the Bush visit failed even before he arrived. This visit worked in favor of Israeli interests, not for the Palestinians," says Khader Dibs, a middle-age father and manager of the local sanitation office who was among many who sat watching the speeches on a new flat-screen television hanging on the wall, which turns the Abu Kheir Cafe in the Shuafat Refugee Camp into something of a town square. Men came to discuss the politics of the day and women stopped in to eavesdrop while they picked up a tub of the freshest hummus in town.

Palestinians here say they wish Bush would come to their neck of the woods, too, to see what it means to have their freedom of movement constantly curtailed.

"Our whole life is waiting at checkpoints. It's a humiliation," Mr. Dibs says. "I didn't hear Bush talk about Israel's recent assassinations, incursions, and killings, either. The money spent on his visit would have been better spent on development."

Dibs's views were echoed by many average Palestinians Thursday as Bush pledged to see the signing of a treaty leading to a Palestine state before his term ends. His visit was the first US presidential visit to the PA headquarters in the West Bank, but few were impressed with the intended symbolism.

Shortly after a press conference between Bush and Mr. Abbas ended, an increasingly influential Islamist group arrived to share its take on the American push for a deal heard – a point of view that seemed to garner more interest.

The activist from Hizb ut-Tahrir (the Party of Liberation), an international Islamic movement, began passing out professional-looking photocopies of a statement denouncing Bush and discouraging Palestinians from putting any hope in peace with Israel.

Palestinians say Hizb ut-Tahrir, which argues that now is not the time to make jihad, or holy war, is beginning to gain in popularity against Hamas, the Islamist militants who won at polls here two years ago and recently wrested control of Abbas's Fatah faction in Gaza last summer.

Hizb ut-Tahrir's message has appeal, the men say, because too many here have long lost hope for the establishment of a Palestinian state: whether because they don't think Israel is serious about enabling that to happen, or because their own Palestinian brethren are not willing to compromise on their claims to what is now Israel proper.

And, because Bush's name is synonymous with the post-9/11 war on terror, many Palestinians treat the US president as if he's the last person who would be able to make Palestinian independence a reality.

"The whole world lost confidence in Bush after the Iraq war. We worry that what he did in Iraq, he'll do in Iran," says Abdul-Fatah Julani, another cafe patron.

A younger man chimes in: "He makes peace out of killing Muslims."

Just a few blocks away from Abbas's presidential compound, about 40 protesters chanted, "Bush, Bush, Out, Out" and "Palestine, Freedom, Freedom," before being chased away by billy-club swinging policemen.

Demonstrators complained that a curfew imposed by police officers on the residents of central Ramallah to secure the city for Bush had prevented more demonstrators from joining the protest.

"We are against everything that is happening in the Muqata," says Fares Fares, referring to Abbas's compound. "Bush won't stand with us. We don't like Bush because he destroyed the world – Iraq, Afghanistan, and Lebanon. And look how he's imposed a closure on Gaza."

Mustafa Barghouti, a Palestinian parliamentarian, tried to mediate between security forces and the demonstrators.

"The officer said we don't have a permit and that we shouldn't be in the streets," says Mr. Barghouti, who complained that the Palestinian casualties from Israeli attacks have doubled since the Annapolis, Md., peace conference that launched the peace initiative.

"We would be the first to be happy if this were a historic day, and if we achieve a Palestinian state. But the president of the United States of America must stop being biased toward Israel. We are not against the visit, but we are against the bias. We want [Bush] to become better," he says.

Though in the minority, some Palestinians say they did, in fact, detect an evolution in the American position toward the peace process. "This is not like the [President] Clinton visit, when he visited Gaza and was welcomed in the streets with his picture and American flags. The political weather is different now," says Hafez Barghouti, an editor of the daily newspaper *Al-Hayat Al-Jedidah*. "For the first time Bush spoke about the settlements as an obstacle to peace, and not just the illegal outposts. When the Americans talk about a Palestinian state and building the infrastructure for the Palestinian state, it's very important."

Barghouti also said he was encouraged by Bush's trip from Jerusalem to Ramallah. Heavy fog forced the president to forgo a helicopter and drive by the Israeli military checkpoints that frustrate Palestinians on a daily basis. At least, he remarked, the weather may have helped the Palestinian people.

Kenya *continued*

without a lot of complaints about vote-rigging. It gave Odinga's party 92 seats and Mwai Kibaki only 34 seats. In the presidential elections conducted simultaneously, Kenya's electoral commission declared that Kibaki had won with a margin of 230,000 votes.

The national counting center, however, pointed to many discrepancies. In one constituency, for example, according to the center Odinga took 5 percent of the vote, but the electoral commission gave him 99 percent of the vote. In several other constituencies, far more people cast a vote for president than cast ballots in the parliamentary elections – not impossible, but suspicious because they were run simultaneously.

Prunier concludes that perhaps Odinga's votes weren't tampered with very much but that Kibaki's numbers were inflated. Violence exploded in the slums and in the western provinces (where the Kikuyu had seized land) almost as soon as the results were announced. Cynical and distrustful of the ruling party, the opposition was expecting the government to rig the election. The violence was both anti-establishment and anti-Kikuyu.

As the violence escalated, of course old scores were also being settled. Hundreds of people were hacked and bludgeoned to death and some burnt to death in their homes. Thirty people, mostly women and children, were burnt to death in a church where they had sought shelter. Officially the death count was 600 but observers claim the count was much higher.

Luo slaughtered Kikuyu and the thugs of the Mungiki sect killed the Luo in the slums, seeking favor with the Kikuyu establishment. Over 250,000 people fled and became refugees in their own country, most of them Kikuyu who had long ago moved into the western territories. Many of them have lost homes and businesses and are afraid to go back. Within days a huge humanitarian crises loomed, as these people had no food or shelter.

The greed and lust for power of one man and his cronies has delivered a severe blow, not just to Kenya's economy but to the levels of trust that sustain a political community. The return of tribal violence on such a huge scale has also damaged hopes that Africa's politics can rise above ancient enmities.

Scott Baldauf of the Christian Science Monitor asks whether the comments of international observers from the EU actually inflamed the situation. They very quickly expressed doubts about the validity of the election. David Throup, a professor at John Hopkin's School for Advanced International Studies, charges that the EU observers were irresponsible in releasing their report before getting a final tally and while passions were high. "They almost suggested the election was rigged on the evidence from just two constituencies."

Wafulu Okumi, head of the African security analysis program in South Africa, reminded the observers that both sides were culpable. Odinga's party manipulated vote counts too. If the observers had made this clear, he said, perhaps that would have tempered the anger.

It does seem however, that the Kibaki regime had greater opportunities to manipulate the numbers and hence their tampering was on a larger scale.

News

Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

Tsar Vladimir

In the Russian language *Vladimir* means "lord of the world," perhaps a not inappropriate name for a man whose overwhelming popularity has fuelled his desire to hold onto political power for as long as he can. Thus far President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin's ambitions are not global in extent; but he does aspire to secure the Russian Federation's place in the world as a force to be reckoned with, as well as his own position of leadership within that country.

Since coming to office on the last day of 1999, Putin has moved to weaken a number of political institutions while accumulating more power in the presidency. Within months the former KGB man had established seven super districts between the federal and regional governments, over which he personally appointed military officers as "governors general." That the 1993 Constitution made no provision for such districts mattered little; no one moved to stop him.

He then replaced the previously-elected governors of the 89 regions with Kremlin appointees, ostensibly to stamp out corruption by local oligarchs. This altered the character of the Federation Council, the upper chamber of Russia's Parliament representing the regions, in effect bringing it into Putin's quasi-imperial court. Breaking recent precedent, he openly identified with United Russia, the principal pro-Kremlin political party, and even facilitated the formation of smaller opposition parties to siphon support from larger opponents. Finally he changed the electoral system and toughened the requirements for official party status, ensuring that United Russia and its allies would have an advantage while smaller parties were eliminated altogether.

Dmitri Trenin, of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, has written that under Putin "the presidency is the only functioning institution" of the Russian constitution. Of course, that will change in March, when Putin stands down and yields the presidency to an elected successor. That person is almost certain to be Dmitri Medvedev, handpicked last month by Putin himself. Putin will then become prime minister, signalling a shift in power away from the head of state to the head of government. Medvedev is expected to be at most a figurehead president, much like the German state president or Canada's governor general.

Last semester I taught my biennial Russian politics course. Four years ago it was still possible to assume that Russia was in a rocky transition to democracy, and that's how I taught it. Two years ago it was becoming increasingly difficult to make this case, and by last September I abandoned the premise entirely, as it became clear that the Russian government was engaging in tactics of intimidation and suppression of press freedom to stack the parliamentary election in favour of United Russia. When pro-Kremlin parties won 393 out of 450 seats in the State Duma, no one was surprised.

This is not to say that constitutional democracy is impossible in Russia. True, political cultures do not change quickly or easily for the most part. Nevertheless, back in 1215 few observers would have guessed that *Magna Carta* was anything more than a treaty confirming the English barons' victory over King John at Runnymede. Yet we now recognize that over the long term it spelled the beginning of constitutional government in the English-speaking countries. It is not impossible that Putin's move to the premiership could establish a precedent for a future prime minister to check the overreaching power of an ambitious president. In such fashion constitutional government, as in England and elsewhere, could develop, not by explicit design, but through a series of seemingly fortuitous, but ultimately providential, events and actions by otherwise self-interested actors.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario, and is the author of the award-winning Political Visions and Illusions *(InterVarsity Press). His blog can be found at:* <http://byzantinecalvinist.blogspot.com/>.

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Nicaragua *...continued*

says Liberal lawmaker and National Assembly leader Wilfredo Navarro.

Opposition lawmakers, who represent a majority of seats in Nicaragua's unicameral National Assembly, yet are divi-ded over leadership issues, came together in December to form a new "bloc against the dictatorship" – the first coordinated front against Ortega's government since it came to power last January.

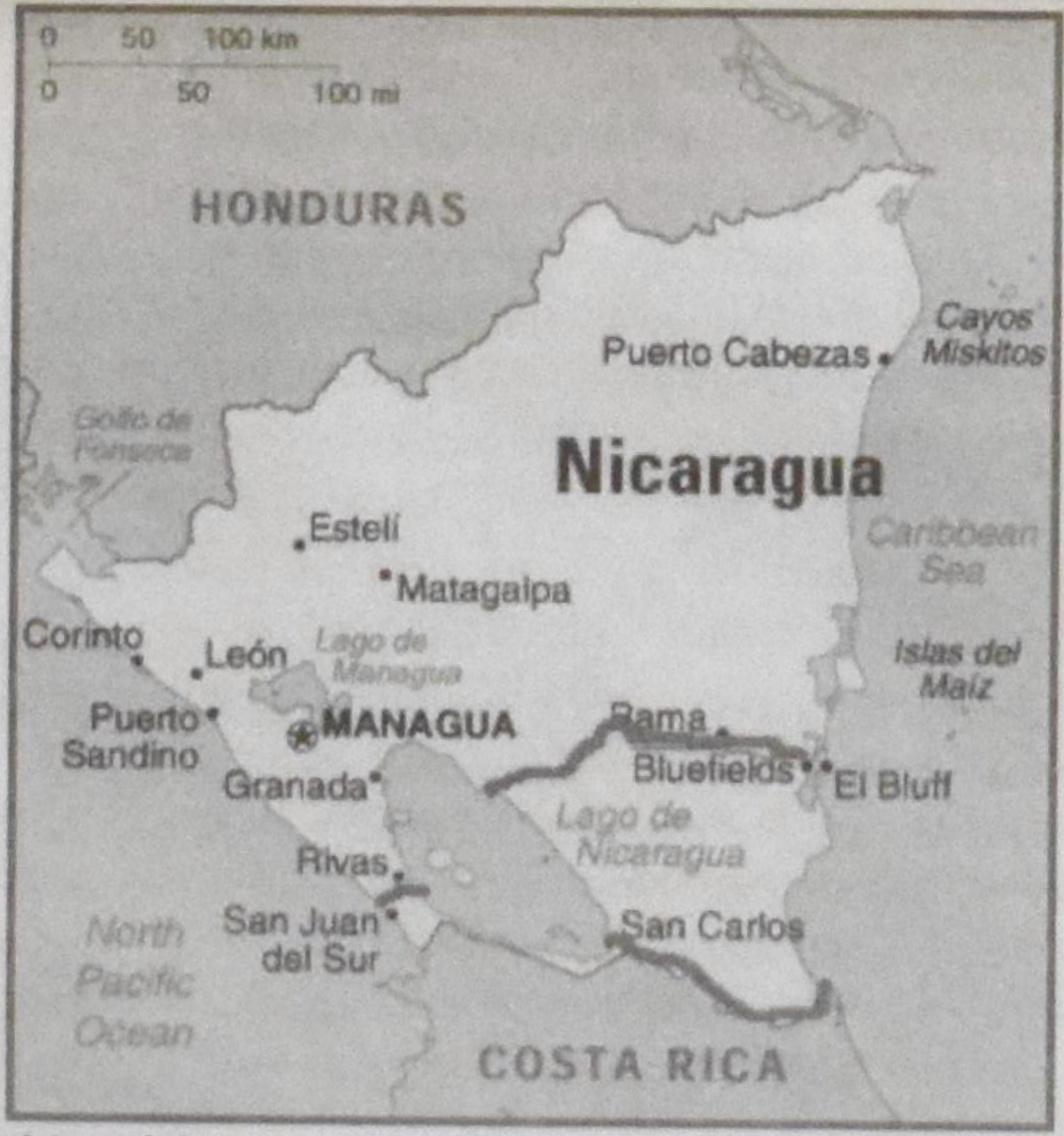
But the opposition bloc's silver bullet may be to reenact a stalled law that Ortega himself devised two years ago to weaken the administration of his predecessor, Enrique Bolaños.

In a series of meetings over Christmas break, oppositionists agreed to back a reform that they have long opposed to transfer some governmental authorities from the presidency to the legislature. The reform law, which will take effect Jan. 20 unless suspended by law-makers, was Ortega's original plan to consolidate power in the legislature in the event that he couldn't regain the presidency.

Not all of Ortega's opposition is from the right. The president faces growing opposition from many ex-Sandinistas, who fought the US-backed Somoza dictatorship in the 1970s and say Ortega and his wife, Rosario Murillo, are heading in a similar direction.

The president claims his government is only working to strengthen participative democracy. "The political will of President Daniel is to share the presidency with the people," Ms. Murillo said. "We are servants of the people, because it's the people who are really in the presidency. And how does this translate into daily life? Through the creation of the Councils of Citizen Power."

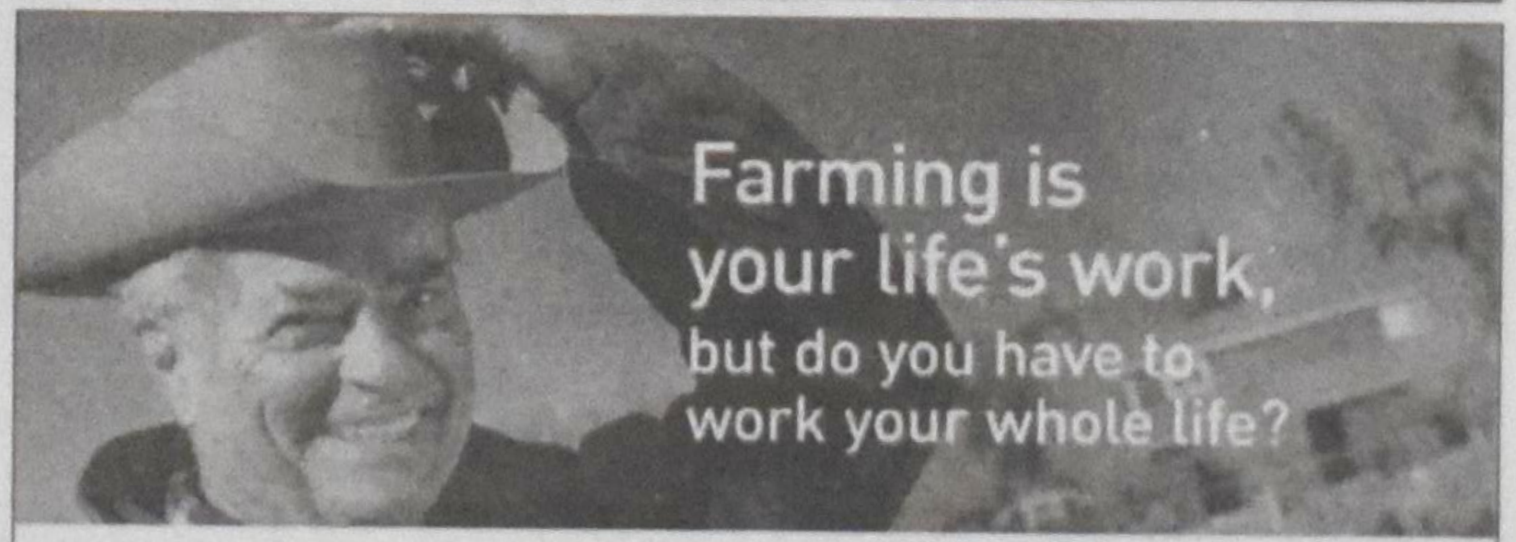
Critics worry that citizen councils are being created as a parallel government to undermine local authorities. "There is a distinction between citizen participation [in



Map of Nicaragua with alternative roads for seaway

government] and the integration of citizens into the state," said Liberal lawmaker José Paillas, head of the legislative judicial commission. "The first is modern democracy, the second is totalitarianism."

In many neighborhoods, the CPCs are already organized under local Sandinista leadership. "The objective is to solve neighborhood problems, which in our case include security, road paving, and drainage issues; our CPC is providing a useful channel to the state and municipal institutions," says Alistair Thirkettle, a British citizen and longtime resident of the colonial city of León, where he joined his local CPC. "If this all sounds very parochial, that's because it is. I compare the CPCs here to Parish Councils in England. I remain optimistic!"



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Editorial

Surviving hospital food

Harry der Nederlanden

I'm writing this editorial from my hospital bed in a small room on the emergency ward. Saturday night I was told to hustle to the emergency because I was running a fever. Apparently a fever is a very bad thing when chemotherapy has whittled down your defences.

After spending four hours in emergency just to get a blood test, a chubby Chinese doctor kindly invited me to spend the night there. He said he wanted to take another blood test in the morning.

"Wouldn't it work just as well if I went home, slept there and then returned in the morning?"

"Yes, that would work too," he replied. He was a very jovial, obliging fellow. I was expecting him to tell us a joke any minute, and perhaps he did because I only understood about half of what he said. All I wanted to hear is, Yes you can go home.

I don't know why they invited me to stay overnight, because I heard the nurses saying that there were no more beds.

Besides, with people constantly coming and going in emergency, paramedics crashing stretchers against the wall, kids wailing and nurses dropping clipboards and other things, sometimes the place is as noisy as a bowling alley. I was glad to be going home.

However, after my second blood test Sunday morning, I was admitted and put in the same room on the emergency ward. There were still no beds. The room was equipped with a large ventilation unit to cut down on the chances of infection. It was like sleeping next to the main unit of a central air conditioner. But that was to my advantage. After I'd laid there for a few hours, a corps of police officers ushered in a man strapped down to a stretcher. He was screaming, roaring, cursing. And wouldn't you know it? They put him in the room next to mine. Sometimes it sounded as if the guy had thrown his nightstand against the wall.

He quite clearly did not want to be here. I could sympathize with him, but my aversion to hospitals isn't nearly as extreme as his. It is increasing, however. It's not the doctors or the nurses or the aids. It's the food.

When I got my breakfast the next morning, I was tempted to throw my tray against the wall. In the middle of the tray was a large plate with a stylish plastic cover. For some reason, it made me think, Ah! Pancakes! But when I lifted the cover, there lay the tiniest muffin I've ever seen. The poor thing had been slaughtered. It was cut in half, but the muffin was so small that each half almost vanished. It was an almost ethereal object.

But all was not yet lost. On the tray was a little plastic cup about the size of a Dutch teacup. I was reminded of the Second World War when the Dutch cut off the top half of their stoves for efficiency's sake. When I pried off the plastic lid, there it was – the main course: a solidified glabrous mass about the size of half a billiard ball. Checking the menu, I saw that it was supposed to be cream of wheat, but there was absolutely nothing creamy about it.

Luckily, there was also a carton of milk, and I desperately set about to make this solid lump live up to its name. I punished it severely. I attacked it with the ferocity of Sir Lancelot whittling down an evil dragon. But to dissolve the stubborn mass would have required a 350 watt Kitchen Aide mixer like the one I bought Rose for Christmas. Where's your Kitchen Aide when you need it?

The staff who assembled this treat must have been somewhat embarrassed by the paucity of food on the tray, for as an afterthought they had tossed a handful of other goodies, like a wee dollop of jam and a tiny strip of processed cheese. It took me 15 minutes to dislodge the latter from the roof of my mouth. There was one packet of sugar to divide between the instant coffee and the cream of wheat – and me a double-double guy. Of course, the amount of water provided for the instant coffee amounted to about one-fourth of a small cup at Tim Horton's, so perhaps they had calculated that one packet would be enough. I'm told that there are people with calculators involved in creating the menu. I'm quite sure there were no real cooks involved.

Upon inquiry, I learned that the food was all prepared in a town on the other side of the Niagara Peninsula. I concluded that the food processing company (most of it was already preprocessed) was aiming for style rather than content or quantity. The minimalist style, I hear, is making a comeback. My food tray is proof of it.

There was one high-tech touch that crowned my morning with glory. I was waiting for the nurse to bring a basin of hot water, a washcloth and a towel. But what she dropped on my tray table was a small plastic packet about 5 by 12 inches. Inside were no less than 8 polyester/rayon cloths impregnated with no less than 10 chemicals, none of which I recognized. On the wrapper was a small chart with a human figure divided into 8 zones conveniently numbered to go with the 8 washcloths. After wiping each zone, you toss the washcloth into the trash. There's a warning on the package that some people develop a rash and that if you get the stuff in your mouth to call Poison Control. I got a rash just reading the packet.

But that's what we (still) call progress. It saves water, and no one has to collect the dirty towels and the basin afterward.

A couple of hours after breakfast, my wife stopped by and brought me a BELT. No, not something to hang myself with, but one of those bagel sandwiches advertised on t.v. by Tim Horton's. Tim Horton's built right across from the hospital. I have a sneaking suspicion that it's a goldmine. I have visions of patients in their open-backed gowns, connected to tubes and pumps, pushing walkers and wheelchairs to flock across the road to get something tasty, if only a cup of real coffee.

After the meager breakfast, I expected something more substantial at noon. But when I lifted that stylish plastic lid – there it was, a small grey ball of what looked like brain matter plus a handful of very, very cold noodles coated with something that was meant to resemble cheese.

My oncologist is always urging me to eat, eat, eat. To gain weight when you have cancer and are on chemo is a small victory. And so far at every weigh-in, I've earned a pat on the back. Next time I may not. Unless my wife continues to supplement my diet.

I suspect that our hospital, at least on the dietary level, has embraced a Gnostic theology. You may remember Bert Hielema talking about gnosticism now and again. It sees the body as an impediment to true spirituality and purity. The ancient Gnostics were austere and simple in lifestyle and diet. I imagine them as gaunt, hollow-eyed creatures like Giacometti sculptures.

So if you're inclined to become a Gnostic mystic, I invite you to sign in to our local hospital.

Of course, a cynic might suggest that the vile food is a deliberate strategy conceived by the government to get people to sign out as soon as possible to get some home cooking. So the food preparers (I won't call them cooks) may be saving the government millions. One day some government bureaucrat will no doubt give them a plaque and a coupon for Tim Horton's. I'd like to see them arrested for culinary abuse or gastronomic fraud.

I just called home to ask Rose to bring me some antacids.

I end with a little prayer:

Dear Lord, I thank you for all good things

And even for some things that are not so good – like my hospital meals.

Forgive me for complaining.

And forgive the cook for criminal negligence.

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Nature

Flowers & Thistles
Curt Gesch

Chicken castles

Mad King Ludwig had one.
William Randolph Hearst had four of them.
Even Mickey Mouse has one.
So why shouldn't my chickens have a good home,
if not a castle?

I think I can explain where my ideas about chicken housing came from. One of my first woodworking projects as a child was making chicken nesting boxes. We had a rather elaborate chicken coop for the day, an L-shaped structure housing chickens, pigeons, and – once – rabbits.[1] To give them access to the outside my dad built a wire run attached to the old garage that housed the coop itself. I thought it was quite a nice outside run but – looking at it today, I see that it was quite small.

Our neighbour had a hundred or so white leghorns at the farm. They ran loose around the barns, but we had a lot with gardens and flowerbeds, so a pen was a necessity for us.

When I moved to Canada, I visited friends who raised a few chickens, brown-egg layers, with a rooster for fertilized eggs: the *natural way,* I was told. Truth to tell, these chicken were pretty sad creatures: big, ugly, partly-naked creatures that laid big eggs when they weren't picking at each other, and which trampled down the soil in their small outside runs until even chicken claws had a hard time scratching up a worm or two. They were so starved for greens that they ate virtually anything I poked through the fence, even cauliflower stalks (without soy sauce).

When I got my first bantams, I determined that they should have a better life. Using old posts from a farm, scrounged-up chicken wire, and pieces of herring netting for a roof, I constructed an outside run that was about 12 feet by 20 feet in size. Letting the chickens run loose was not an option because I had rather extensive vegetable and flower gardens on that lot. Also, one of the neighbours also had an undisciplined dog that enjoyed attacking tame rabbits, chickens, and ducks.

After the chickens had eaten the grass out of the run, they began scratching and soon their "floor" resembled the pseudo-concrete runs that I wanted to avoid. The solution was simple: a second outside run. So we cut another hole in the wall and made a smaller run next to the garage on the other side. This one we used for composting. In those days, I didn't make compost, but just threw everything in that "side run," and let the chickens attack it, shred it, dig through it, and generally help it get ready for spreading on the garden in the fall.

While they worked at this, and during the winter, I threw fall rye seed in the original outside run and let it grow. Eventually, we worked out a sort of rotational feeding plan that gave the chickens food, exercise, and – I suppose it was this for a chicken – a modicum of adventure. After laying eggs everyday, I suspected that, even without anthropomorphizing, chickens needed *some* diversion.

A Silver Phoenix rooster, the choice of the Japanese emperor, deserves a castle.

My chickens didn't get a castle as impressive as Mickey Mouse's, but they also did experience life, which poor Mousy never did. (And although they had a castle of sorts, they also didn't get their lives chronicled *Citizen Kane*, or earn the sobriquet, the Mad King.)

*****

Still, it is a little hard to get too worked up about chickens. They can be cute, but also vicious to each other; beautiful at first, but rather shop-worn; productive, but also plagued by a rather short lifespan. We're not talking about whales here, but chickens. Bird-brains. The raw material of KFC and Campbell's Chicken Noodle Soup.

But I have been reinforced in my concern for even lowly fowl. I have been thinking quite a bit about *how* we treat animals. I am not a PETA-enthusiast, neither a vegetarian nor a vegan, but I think that, insofar as it is in our power, we have an obligation to treat our domesticated animals with reasonable respect and care.

I'm not one who thinks that dogs and cats go to heaven, but I think that being a steward involves taking earth-care and creature-care seriously. And so I am repairing my present chicken "set-up" after last winter's early, heavy snows wreaked havoc on the wire. Being possessed of land, time (retirement), and lots of used materials, I have rearranged things so that my laying chickens have a tiny "exercise yard" and three "pastures." I am able to practice rotational grazing, so that for most of the year, the chickens can get greens for their salad, and do some serious scratching with hope of finding a worm, grub, centipede or nematode.

"Yes, I'm a chicken and live in a palace. No, you may not comment on my hair-style."

*****

I read a piece of writing last spring in which the Rev. Jack Roeda[2] describes bulky, ungainly Holstein dairy cows dancing with joy and relief when they finally were released from a mucky yard onto some real grass. If cows, I thought, why not chickens?

Around here, rain and mud are not the only problems, but five months of frost. All our chickens are descendents of Asian jungle fowl, I think, but they certainly don't mind cold weather, as long as they don't have to wade through snow.

Even though it was -6 C., yesterday I let the chickens out in the sun. I put some mouldy barley straw from a round bale on the ground for them so their little tropical feet wouldn't get too cold. Being baled up slightly damp, it was now quite firm. Not quite rock-hard, but close. I had to use a saw to cut chunks of it and then pry them off the round bale with a crowbar.

The bantams looked happy to be outside and suffered no frost-bitten combs. They seemed to have a real hoot (a real *cluck* just doesn't sound right) while scratching through that frozen straw to find the grain I had thrown down. Most of them stayed outside until the sun went down.

Jack Roeda's cows danced. I doubt that the twenty-thousand birds in a commercial chicken barn do much dancing. My fifteen hens in wire-enclosed pens may not exactly dance, either, but they deserve some relief from boredom and the opportunity to live as something more than production units in a cage.

I don't mind being called sentimental, while providing a home – if not a castle – for my fowl.

And so I say, "Dance, chickens, dance!" (Or at least scratch.)

(Footnotes)

[1] Also the occasional predatory barn cat, mink, opossum, and barn rat.

[2] Jack Roeda, from *Today*, ©The Back to God Hour. Palos Heights, Illinois, April 2007.

Curt Gesch, a resident of Quick, B.C., would love to let his chickens range freely all over his 153 acres. Unfortunately, so would the foxes, coyotes, martens, bears, goshawks, Cooper's hawks, and great horned owls.

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Point of view

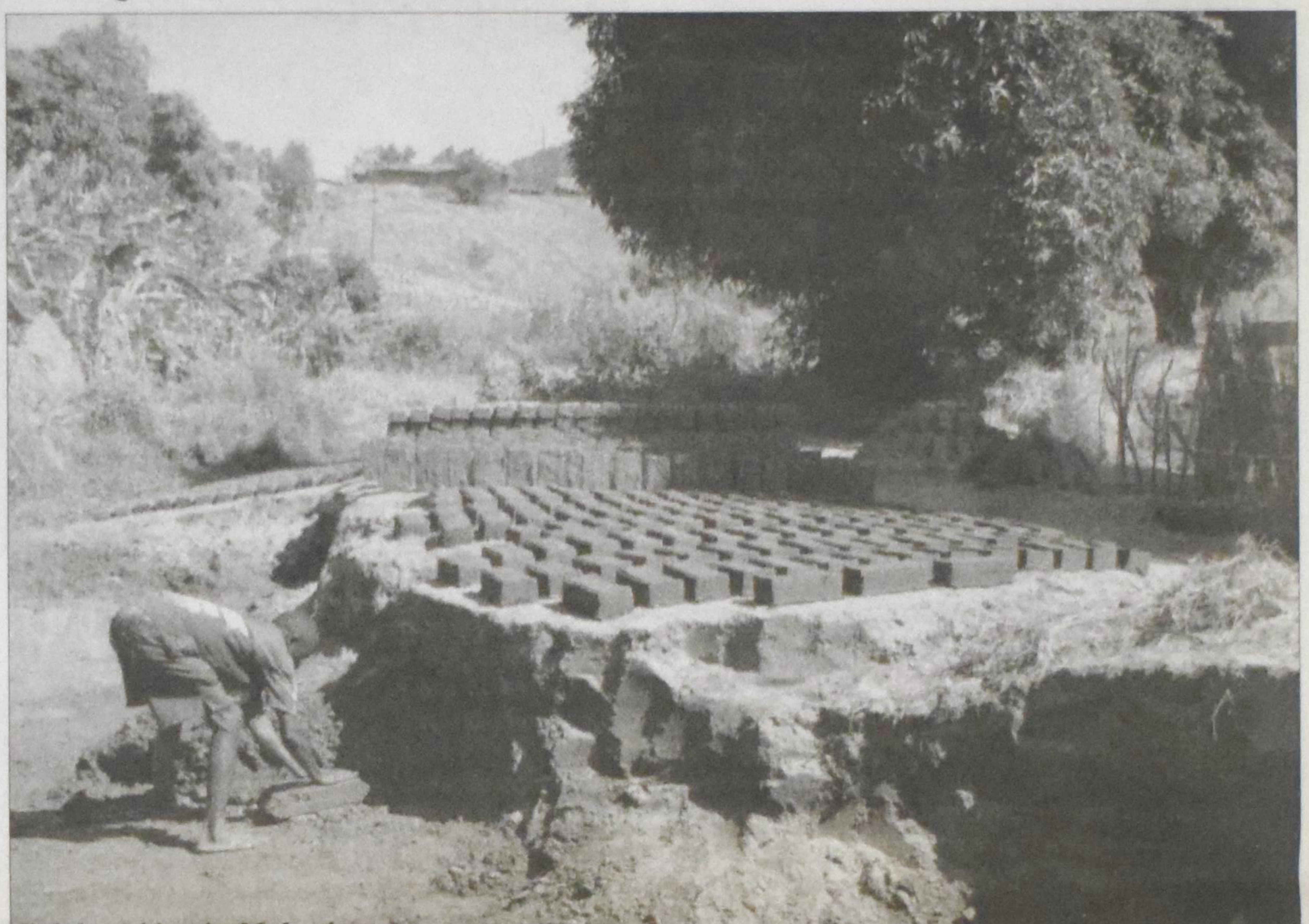
Eating my words

Angela Bick

My kitchen has four clocks

It took Jackie almost a year to cross everything off her list of things to do. She packed clothes, books and dishes carefully into tote boxes, then stacked these in the barn. While Jackie's school searched for her replacement, Wiebe cleaned out the back of his pick-up, pausing over each tool before deciding which ones to take. They rented out their house, made arrangements at the bank, and kissed their nearly-grown children good-bye. The Brinkmans were taking a sabbatical from life in Canada: one year traveling overseas – not as college graduates, taking the obligatory tramp through Europe or India, but as middle-aged Christians doing some of God's work. Malawi, a small country in South-East Africa, was their first stop.

A decrepit truck took the Brinkmans from the airport in Malawi to the Malingunde Women's Training Centre. After the first mile, Jackie was overwhelmed. "What are we *doing* here?" she wondered. The scenery was surreal. Everything seemed red – the houses, the mud, the road. There were very few trees, and an enormous amount of people. It felt like they had gone back in time. Wiebe and Jackie moved into the Centre's compound, where Jackie planned to teach English and Wiebe was going to be its maintenance man. They hoped to be useful, like most volunteers, so that they could leave behind completed tasks, fixed-up buildings and so on. It was soon clear, however, that such accomplishments weren't on the agenda. In fact, it was better to forget about agendas completely.



Brick making in Malawi

I first heard the terms "mono-chronic" and "poly-chronic" from my cousin Hannah, after she spent a semester in Ghana. Edward Hall is the sociologist who coined these words to describe how different cultures view time. In mono-chronic societies, time is linear; in poly-chronic ones, it's more flexible. If you plan to travel or do mission work in another country, it's smart to learn a bit of the native language first. Just as important, according to Hall, is an understanding of each country's "language of time."

Canadians are essentially mono-chronic. We divide our time into sections and plan certain activities for each slot. Our schedules take precedence over everything else, even if that means leaving a job unfinished. Short-term relationships are the norm. Our schools and work-places reward people who pay close attention to the clock.

Not all cultures share this hyper-awareness of time. A person from a poly-chronic culture values relationships over schedules and human interaction over deadlines. Arranged meeting times are vague, and plans can be changed easily. You can imagine why it might be challenging for a person raised poly-chronically to live in a mono-chronic country, or vice versa.

In Malawi, everything took the Brinkmans about four times longer than they expected. "Even though we are enjoying our time here and feel that we are helping out," Jackie wrote, "there are times where you just feel like leaving. There are moments of extreme frustration when things that you hoped to get done take forever." For example, Wiebe was asked to build a small guardhouse for one of the security men, so that the man's family could come and live with him. There was one catch: no bricks. So, the local men taught Wiebe how to make bricks. Men from the centre helped Wiebe to make a wooden form and mix the clay; then they poured and baked and transported by wheel-barrow 20,000 bricks. From a mono-chronic point of view, the process was inefficient and time-consuming.

Fortunately, the Brinkmans had been warned not to concentrate on getting things done, but on relationships instead. In these terms, Wiebe and Jackie assess their experience more positively. At Malingunde Women's Training Centre, it was easier to build friendships than houses.

I think that mission work is enhanced when the cultural exchange is equal – when we approach each meeting as ready to learn as we are to teach. As exasperating as the poly-chronic perspective may seem to us, our over-scheduled lives could learn something from the African emphasis on people above everything else. The extended family, for instance, typically plays much more of a central role in African lives than it does here.

Foreign visitors might think that Canadians are obsessed for always wearing watches and for having clocks in public buildings. Even my kitchen has four clocks. The fast food market uses verbs that betray how little time we want to spend with food: drive-through, pick-up, take-out or delivery? Many cookbooks advertise the rapidity of their recipes. Even the humble Crock-Pot, which cooks slowly, works independently in order to save the chef time.

It wouldn't be hard to make a few changes in my family's approach to cooking and serving food. I could cross a few meetings and appointments off our calendar, and have friends over for a simple sit-down meal instead. When our guests arrive, I can make a point of sitting down to talk rather than finishing certain tasks in the kitchen. I can serve each dish after a natural pause in the conversation, instead of hurrying for more once the last plate is clean. I could get rid of a few kitchen clocks, too.

Making bread from scratch (without a machine) sounds about as archaic as making bricks. It is time-consuming, but occasionally it's good to put time into the things we consume. And nothing smells more welcoming than freshly-baked bread. I'm going to make this bread and then give it to the busiest person I know. Will she stop, sit down, and have some tea and cinnamon toast? Time will tell.

Cinnamon Swirl Bread

¼ cup warm water
1 Tbsp. dry active yeast
Combine in a small bowl and stir to dissolve.

2 cups whole wheat bread flour
1 cup milk (scalded)
¾ cup orange juice
½ cup sugar
¼ cup oil or butter
1 egg
1 Tbsp. orange peel (grated)
1 ½ tsp. salt
Combine in a large mixing bowl and mix well. When cooled to lukewarm, add yeast mixture.

4 ½ -5 ½ cups bread flour
Add enough flour to make a soft dough. Knead 8-10 minutes until smooth. Place in a greased bowl, turn to grease both sides, cover with a damp cloth and let rise until doubled in bulk (about 1 ¼ hours). Punch down and divide in half. Roll each portion out.

½ cup sugar
1 Tbsp. ground cinnamon
Combine and sprinkle evenly over the two rectangles of dough. Roll up, jelly roll fashion, from short end and place in greased loaf pans. Let rise until doubled. Bake in preheated oven at 350F for about 30 minutes. Let cool before removing.

Slices are delicious toasted the next day.

Angela Reitsma Bick lives in Barrie, Ontario. Send your interesting stories or recipes to: al_angbick@hotmail.com.

Russian Orthodox leader backs Putin's anointed successor

Sophia Kishkovsky

Moscow (ENI) – Patriarch Alexei II and other leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church have voiced their support for President Vladimir Putin's anointing of First Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev as his successor.

They also approved of Medvedev's declaration that he would appoint Putin as prime minister after the scheduled March 2 presidential elections. With the backing of Putin and the United Russia party, which dominates Russian politics, Medvedev, aged 42, is expected to win by a wide margin.

Patriarch Alexei said that a good indication of Medvedev's capabilities is the deputy prime minister's nearly two-decade long political association with Putin, with both men being natives of St. Petersburg, and where Alexei served as metropolitan when it was still Leningrad.

Speaking to reporters after an event at the Russian Academy of Sciences in December, Alexei said that Medvedev has been a great supporter of the church in the academic sphere, pushing for State structures to recognise degrees from religious educational institutions.

"Before, we used to hit a brick wall when we raised this question," said Alexei, the patriarchate's Web site, www.patriarchia.ru reported. He said Medvedev's support has been essential in discussions to introduce a religious component to the Russian school program. A course called "Fundamentals of Orthodox Culture" has been introduced in some schools, but has been met with resistance, including from leading members of the Academy of Sciences.

At a meeting earlier in December with heads of Jewish educational institutions of Russia, Medvedev also said he supports the presence of clergy in the military.

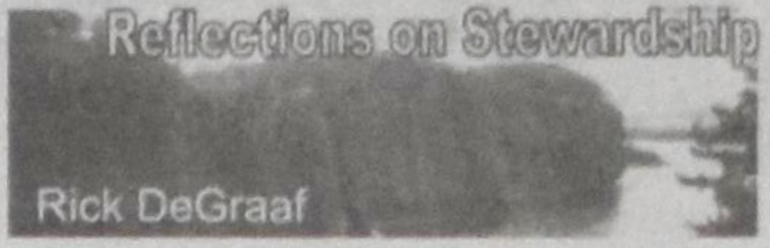
"It is clear that the presence in the army of clergy of various faiths simplifies the situation and helps conduct education work," Medvedev said, the Interfax-Religion news service reported. The Russian military is plagued by discipline and morale problems.

In 2006, Medvedev was appointed to head the Russian government's religious affairs commission.

Metropolitan Kliment of Kaluga and Borovsk, the chancellor of the Moscow Patriarchate welcomed the possibility of Putin serving as Russian prime minister. "If such a decision is made, it will only be to Russia's benefit," he told journalists.

During campaigning for Russia's national elections that took place on December 2, opposition party leaders were critical of the close ties that seemed to exist between Putin and Russian Orthodox leaders. Kasparov.ru, the Web site of opposition leader Garry Kasparov, had written, "The Kremlin continues to cynically use the church as its PR agency, dragging believers into unlawful and amoral politics."

Dmitry Medvedev and Vladimir Putin



Environmental collapse?

As we begin a New Year, I felt it would be a good thing to be reminded of our important role as stewards of the environment. I've invited Cindy Verbeek back to this column. She works with A Rocha Canada and lives in northern BC with her husband and three children. Cindy writes:

It's coming at us through the TV, the Internet, in the movies, in book after book. The world is on the verge of collapse. The environment is beyond repair. And *it's all our fault*! Do you feel the guilt? Do you feel the fear? My questions are: who do we fear and what do we do with the guilt?

Our desire to serve God by taking care of earth should never be motivated by fear, nor paralyzed by guilt, but must be driven by what God tells us through his Word. My study of Scripture teaches that caring for creation is truly biblical and not just something I've made up!

Read Genesis 1:1-3 and let it sink in for a moment. *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty…And God said, "let there be light," and there was light…."* (Genesis 1:1-3) Profound? Maybe not (if you find the familiar boring), but have you ever thought about the repercussions of this declaration? We serve the God of the universe, the Creator of heaven and earth. *"The earth is the Lord's and everything in it"* the Psalmist proclaims in Psalm 24:1. He created it. He loves it. He is in control of it. Doesn't that just make you want to jump up and shout, and yet scare you to death all at the same time! This isn't just some soft cushy little "g" god we're talking about here. He has the power to create something out of *nothing* by just speaking His Word. And he did!

Why? Consider John's gospel and how it parallels the Genesis creation story – John 1:1-3: *In the beginning was the Word.... Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.* The caption in my NIV Bible says *The Word became flesh.* Who is this *Word become flesh* that John is referring to? John 3:16 says, *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.* Jesus Christ, the Word become flesh, God among us, the Creator of heavens and earth through whom all things were made, became part of the created world to give us eternal life. A bit humbling, isn't it? It gets right in the face of any notion that somehow matter doesn't matter. There's more. The Greek word for world here is "kosmos". In its context this passage is speaking of human salvation, but don't you find it curious that the author chose "kosmos" which can mean the entire created order rather than simply the word reserved exclusively for people? I do.

So what are we to do with it all? Matthew Sleeth, Director of A Rocha USA said it well when he chose the title for his book on the subject: *Serve God, Save the Planet.* As we learn to serve God in all aspects of our lives we are able to let go of our greed and depend on God for our needs.

I personally am not afraid of environmental collapse. Oh, there's no doubt in my mind that it's possible and maybe even likely given our current state of affairs. Nevertheless, I believe in a God who is bigger than the current situation; a God who will be with me in all circumstances and is already repairing the damage done to the earth. I believe he will continue to do so until the end time when creation is completely renewed. What scares me is standing before the maker of the universe and answering for what I did or did not do in my stewardship of the world which he created and entrusted to me (Genesis 2:15).

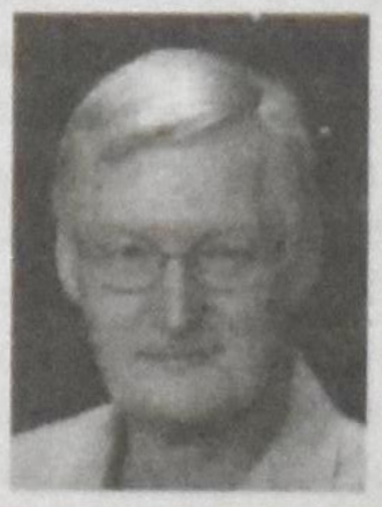
As far as the guilt goes – well, let's face it, we are guilty. We live in a world of greed, covetousness and complacency, and we participate in the using (and many times the abusing) of the world's resources and its people. However, we must not allow that guilt to paralyze us but rather use it to catapult us into living a life of repentance. If we must be guilty of something, may we be guilty of living too simply and loving too much. By living simply with the abundance that is a part of living in North America, may we help others to simply live! In doing so we may serve the Creator of heaven and earth and join him in renewing his broken creation.

If you would like more information on how to be intentional about creation stewardship in your church, home and community contact Cindy at cindy.verbeek@arocha.org or call CC – we'll help you connect with her.

Stewardly tip: Grocery choices. Consider how your choices at the grocery store can make a difference. Eating food that is produced close to home can be fresher and healthier (standards), burns less energy in transportation and supports local farmers. Consider the distance your food purchases traveled to get to you and make choices to buy closer to home!

Readers: Share your 'Stewardly tips' so that we all can make better use of the resources God has entrusted to us. Submit your suggestions (by mail to *Christian Courier* or by email to my address below) and provide your contact information so that we can acknowledge your contribution or ask you for more details.

Next issue: Leading vs managing



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Church

Malaysian Christian leaders protest against ban on use of 'Allah'

Michele Green

SINGAPORE (ENI) – Malaysian Christians have protested against a government ban on the use of the word "Allah" by non-Muslims in the Islamic Southeast Asian nation.

In a statement issued to the media on January 7, the Christian Federation of Malaysia expressed "deep disappointment and regret" at the announcement in the first week of January by the minister in charge of Islamic affairs, Abdullah Zin, that only Muslims were allowed to use the word "Allah". Zin said the word "Allah" referred only to the Muslim God and that non-Muslims were banned from using the expression.

Zin's comments followed a long-running government campaign against a Roman Catholic newspaper because its Malaysian-language section referred to "Allah" as a synonym for God.

The latest ban has fueled concern among Malaysia's non-Muslim population that the government was bolstering the status of Islam at their expense.

"The word 'Allah' is a pre-Islamic word used by Arab Christians before Islam came into being," said Bishop Paul Tan Chee Ing, head of the Malaysian Christian Federation, who is a Jesuit cleric, in a statement.

"We maintain and we have always told the government that we have the right to use the word 'Allah' whether in our Bahasa Malaysia publications or otherwise," the bishop said, adding that the ban violated the right to freedom of religion enshrined in the country's constitution.

About 60 percent of Malaysia's 25 million people are Muslims. Christians and Buddhists, who, mostly from the country's minority Chinese community, make up about 28 percent of the population and Hindus of Indian origin make up about 10 percent.

Non-Muslims have long complained about local government demolition of their places of worship as well as failure to recognise conversions of Muslims to other religions. In some cases, converts have been forced to re-embrace Islam and in other cases deceased converts have been buried as Muslims even if they had been practising Christians, Buddhists or Hindus at the time of their death.

"We have used the word 'Allah' and we will continue to use it because it is our religious right," said the Rev. Hermen Shastri, executive secretary of the Christian Federation of Malaysia.

Egyptian Government compensates Christians after Muslim attacks

Dan Wooding

EGYPT (ANS) – The Egyptian Government has given 1,265,000 Egyptian pounds (US$230,000) in compensation to 17 Coptic Christians whose property was damaged by a mob of angry Muslims.

This news was revealed in a story written by Jennifer Gold on the British website – www.christiantoday.com.

The story stated that last week, in the southern Egyptian town of Isna, a group of Muslims damaged cars and shops belonging to the Christians.

According to the governor of Qena province, Magdy Ayoub, the attacks began after reports that a Coptic Christian pulled down the veil of a Muslim woman in a car park.

According to AP, police arrested 15 people in connection with the attacks, most of whom were later released.

"In a similar event earlier in the month, dozens of Muslims rioted after rumors that Coptic Christians had tried to abduct and sexually assault a teenage Muslim girl," said the Jennifer Gold story.

"The Muslims threw stones and broke windows at a pharmacy where they believed the Christians had forced the girl to have sex with them."

According to AP, the two Coptic Christians suspected of the abduction were arrested by police and detained for 15 days on charges related to sectarian tensions.

The story concluded, "Governor Ayoub has said that prominent local Muslim and Christian figures plan to meet in a bid to ease the sectarian tension. "Southern Egypt is no stranger to tension and conflict between Muslims and Coptic Christians. In 2000, 21 Christians and a Muslim were killed in the village of Kosheh after a dispute turned into a fight between armed villagers."

Egypt is a country of 76.5 million people. Around 10 per cent of them are Coptic Christians.

Dan Wooding, 67, is an award winning British journalist now living in Southern California with his wife Norma of 44 years. He is the founder and international director of ASSIST (Aid to Special Saints in Strategic Times) and the ASSIST News Service (ANS).

Largest attack on Christians in India claims 4 lives, 95 churches

HYDERABAD, ANDHRA PRADESH, INDIA (ANS)–The All India Christian Council (AICC) leaders have released two reports on the anti-Christian violence in Orissa which began on Christmas Eve. Newly confirmed cases of arson, murder, and assault make this violence qualify as the largest attack on the Christian community in the history of democratic India. Both reports show that the Dalits – formerly known as untouchables – were the main group affected by the violence.

Four leaders from AICC chapters in Orissa visited the affected villages from January 3-5 and released their report on Jan. 7, 2008. The report says 95 churches were vandalized or destroyed, 730 Christian homes burnt, and four Christians killed with many still missing and presumed dead.

On Jan. 5, 2008, AICC Secretary-General John Dayal released a white paper after visiting the area. Advocate Nicholas Barla, a lawyer and human rights expert, and Mr. Hemant Nayak, a social scientist and human rights and development activist, were also part of the fact finding team. They concluded that the attacks on Christians included simultaneous, planned violence by extremist Hindutva supporters and complicity and consistent incompetence by police and local authorities.

According to media reports, two members from India's National Commission for Minorities (NCM), Dileep Padgaonkar and Zoya Hasan, are currently in Orissa to investigate the violence.

"We are saddened to acknowledge the violence in Orissa will go into the history books as an unprecedented attack on Christians in India. The tragedy is deepened by proof that the violence was avoidable if the authorities had enforced the rule of law," said Dr. Joseph D'souza, AICC President.

The violence allegedly began when Christians in Bamunigaon village in Kandhamal district of Orissa began to celebrate Christmas Eve. Local Hindu fundamentalists opposed the event and a quarrel ensued. Also, a Hindutva leader, Swami Saraswati, was attacked by unknown assailants – he alleged they were Christians. The next day a Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP)-affiliated group called for a strike and VHP members began attacking Christians across the state.

The All India Christian Council (www.AICCindia.org), birthed in 1998, exists to protect and serve the Christian community, minorities, and the oppressed castes. The AICC is a coalition of thousands of Indian denominations, organizations, and lay leaders.

The Dalit Freedom Network's mission is to partner with the Dalits (India's Untouchables) in their quest for religious freedom, social justice, and human dignity by mobilizing human, informational, and financial resources. Their website is: www.dalitnetwork.org

From Dalit Freedom Network in association with A.I.C.C./SC-ST Federations

Indian churches say they can't get access to Orissa violence victims

Anto Akkara

Bhubaneswar, India (ENI) – National church bodies in India have demanded access to the troubled Kandhamal region of Orissa state to distribute relief and visit the families affected by a recent outbreak of violence aimed at Christians.

"We are established and credible national bodies and have every right to distribute relief to the victims of violence," Church of North India Bishop Dinesh Kumar Sahu, general secretary of the National Council of Churches in India, told journalists in Bhubaneswar, the Orissa capital.

The press conference, at the city sometimes called the Temple city of India, was jointly convened by the NCCI, a grouping of 29 Orthodox and Protestant churches in India along with the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India.

The church leaders said the authorities were preventing their relief bodies from distributing aid in the area affected by the violence, that began on Christmas eve, December 24, at Bamunigam in the Kandhamal forests more than 200 kilometres from the capital.

"Why is the government not allowing NGOs to carry out relief work when hundreds of people are suffering?" asked Bishop Sahu. He said that churches are ready to distribute relief to affected people irrespective of creed, in the presence of government officials.

"We never discriminate when we distribute relief to affected people," said the Rev. Babu Joseph, spokesperson for the Roman Catholic bishops at the press conference. He noted that more than 90 percent of the 14,000 houses that the Catholic church had built for victims of the massive tsunami in 2004 were given to Hindus.

About 9,000-10,000 people marched to the Orissa State Assembly building in Bhubaneswar to protest Christmas attacks on Christians and demand justice for victims.

A report distributed at the conference said that more than 50 churches had been damaged or destroyed, and several hundred Christian families displaced in anti-Christian violence. Following clashes between Christians and Hindus over the construction of a traditional Christmas arcade in a market, more than 80 Hindu homes and 31 Christian homes were set on fire in the jungle village, the report stated.

This was followed by a wave of anti-Christian violence that Christian leaders said resulted in churches, other institutions and houses being destroyed and looted by Hindu extremists.

Police did nothing to stop the violence that continued for four days, Catholic spokesperson Joseph said. "This is diabolic violence," said Joseph, who had visited major Christian centres affected by the violence. "It was systematically planned and clinically executed," he asserted. Joseph told ENI in January that police did nothing to stop the violence.

"We cannot understand why the government wants to deny permission for us to distribute relief to the victims," said CNI Bishop Samson Das of Cuttack. "We have every right to meet the people to express our solidarity with them." The chief minister of Orissa state, Navin Patnaik, had pleaded with a delegation of members of the national parliament and senior politicians not to visit the troubled area in a fact-finding mission.

"This shows the inefficiency and failure of the government to protect the threatened people," Sitaram Yechury, secretary of the Communist Party of India-Marxist told ENI. "The government is trying to hide its gross failures."

Pope Benedict's new encyclical prompts debate in Italy

Luigi Sandri

Rome (ENI) – The latest encyclical from Pope Benedict XVI, warning against secular ideas of progress, has prompted a lively debate between newspaper commentators in Italy, with some labeling the Pope a reactionary, but others springing to the pontiff's defence.

"It's not the present pontiff who is reactionary but rather those who criticise him," philosopher Giovanni Reale, co-editor of the philosophical works of Pope John Paul II, told the Milan-based Corriere della Sera. "What the encyclical said is true: if we deny the transcendent we give no space to authentic hope."

In the encyclical about Christian hope, entitled "Spe salvi" in Latin, Pope Benedict criticised secular ideas of progress such as the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, Marxism, and modernity. He said that only hope in Jesus Christ can save humanity

Eugenio Scalfari, the founder of the Rome-based *La Repubblica* newspaper, however, described Benedict as "the Pope who refused the modern world". Pope Benedict, said Scalfari, "doesn't like relativism, because he believes in the absolute truth, his own. But looking at history we can see that the Church as well has been immersed in relativism."

Other commentators underlined the importance of the papal document, saying it was the right time for Pope Benedict to repeat to the contemporary world that its true hope is Jesus Christ alone.

Italian grassroot Christian groups, on the other hand, described the encyclical as being in opposition to Pope John XXIII who in 1962 opened the Second Vatican Council, leading to major reform of the Catholic Church.

Pope John "declared his strong dissent against the prophets of misfortune" about the modern world, the Christian groups said in a statement.

US Vatican watcher John Allen said the encyclical could be seen as a sort of text "greatest hits" collection of Joseph Ratzinger, who was elected Pope Benedict XVI in 2005.

"In essence, the message of Spe Salvi can be expressed this way: If human beings place their hopes for justice, redemption and a better life exclusively in this-worldly forces, whether it's science, politics, or anything else, they're lost," Allen wrote. "Instead, ultimate hope – what the Pope describes as 'the great hope' – lies only in God, because only through the moral and spiritual wisdom acquired through faith, can technology and political structures be directed towards ends which are truly human."

Breakaway Zambia Catholic group against compulsory celibacy

Moses Chitendwe

Ndola, Zambia (ENI)–A breakaway Catholic church has been formed in Zambia and is supporting a campaign by excommunicated former archbishop of Lusaka, Emmanuel Milingo, against compulsory celibacy for priests.

"The profound pain and suffering caused to Roman Catholic priests as a result of celibacy is uncalled for," said Rev. Luciano Mbewe, who said he was the archbishop-elect of the breakaway group that calls itself the Catholic Apostolic National Church in Zambia.

The launch was announced in Lusaka on December 25 by Mbewe, who was expelled from the Catholic Church in Zambia in 2002 for sexual misconduct.

Archbishop Milingo was excommunicated in 2006 for ordaining four married men as bishops. At the time, he was also reported to be living with Maria Sung, a South Korean woman he married in 2001 at a Unification Church ceremony, but from whom he separated after three months following pressure from the Vatican.

"The problem of mandatory celibacy practised by the Roman Catholic Church is one of the reasons behind the formation of the breakaway church inspired by ex-communicated prelate Emmanuel Milingo," said Mbewe, who was a priest in his old church, but is an archbishop in the new one.

The Zambia Episcopal Conference, which represents the country's Roman Catholic bishops, has threatened to take legal action to stop the breakaway group from using the name "Catholic". "The use of the name 'Catholic' is meant to mislead the members of the public," ZEC communications director, the Rev. Paul Samasumo was reported as saying. "We are consulting our lawyers to file a court injunction to restrain the group from the use of the name Catholic," he said. "Everyone has the right to form a church but they have no right to use the name Catholic." Samasumo acknowledged there had been "defections" from the Catholic Church, but said that priests who had left were not using the name "Catholic".

Mbewe stated, however, "The word Catholic means 'universal' and no organization can monopolise it as there are several Catholic churches the world over."

Turkish Christians marking 2000 years since birth of St Paul

Jonathan Luxmoore

Warsaw (ENI) – Turkey's small Roman Catholic community hopes to mark the 2000th anniversary of the birth of St Paul by improving the status of the country's Christian minorities, as well as reopening a church at the apostle's birthplace in Tarsus in the south of the Muslim-majority country.

"This anniversary is certain to attract large numbers of pilgrims, who will obviously need a church where they can feel at home and pray," Bishop Luigi Padovese, the Catholic Church's apostolic vicar of Anatolia told ENI. "A government commission is now formally considering our request. But senior officials have agreed we should be able to worship here. After all, we're not missionaries – we are merely answering the needs of church members."

The Italian-born bishop was speaking during preparations for a pilgrimage to St Paul's burial place in Rome to mark the anniversary year, which formally begins on June 28.

Padovese said a pastoral letter concerning the anniversary would be read in all Catholic churches on January 25, the anniversary of the saint's conversion to Christianity. Talks on ecumenical initiatives are also underway with the Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and other denominations that make up Turkey's 120,000-strong Christian minority.

However, the church counted on officials in Tarsus, nearly 920 kilometres (570 miles) south of Istanbul to make facilities available for pilgrims from around the world, said Bishop Padovese. He said the church had asked to be allowed to make regular use of the Mediterranean town's 12th Century St Paul's Church, which is now a state-owned museum.

"The local authorities are aware of their town's significance for Christians and proud that one of its citizens was once a key figure. On the other hand, they aren't prepared for an increase of religious tourism with its special requirements," said the 60-year-old Franciscan bishop who belongs to a seven-member bishops' conference that includes leaders of Turkey's Armenian, Syriac and Chaldean Catholic communities.

Pope Benedict XVI has declared 2008 the "Year of St Paul" in honour of the saint, who was raised as a Jew named Saul in Tarsus and who took part in the persecution of Christians, but who later changed his name to Paul after experiencing a vision on the road to Damascus.

Paul made three return journeys through Anatolia between the years AD 47 and 57, preaching the Gospel and writing letters to the Galatians and Ephesians, before he was arrested in Jerusalem and beheaded in Rome in AD 65 during the persecution of Emperor Nero.

Most of Turkey's 71 million inhabitants are Sunni Muslims, and the government of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has pledged to respect religious freedom, a precondition for its possible membership of the European Union. However, the 32,000-member Roman Catholic Church is still demanding juridical recognition, including the right to own property and benefit from association status. A 65-year-old Italian, Adriano Franchini, became the latest Catholic priest to be attacked when he was stabbed in the stomach by a young assailant a week before Christmas, while a Protestant pastor, Ramazan Arkan, survived a similar knife wound at Antalya on December 31.

Taizé urges young people to promote unity between churches

Stephen Brown

Geneva (ENI)–The leader of the Taizé community urged tens of thousands of young Christians from Europe who gathered in Geneva at the New Year to organize "vigils of reconciliation" for unity between churches that are divided from each other. "How can we be credible in speaking of a God of love if we remain separate?" Brother Alois, prior of the ecumenical Taizé community said in his meditation at a televised prayer service at Geneva's Palexpo exhibition centre.

"It is up to you young people to take the initiative," said Brother Alois, who became the leader after the death in 2005 of its Swiss-born founder, Brother Roger. "Those who hold positions of responsibility in the churches will support you. It is up to you young people to prepare these 'vigils of reconciliation'."

In launching the community's "call in Geneva for the reconciliation of Christians", (www.taize.fr/en_article5541.html) Brother Alois said "Coming together in this way in prayer vigils is already a way of anticipating unity; it allows the Holy Spirit to unite us...."

The "European Meeting of Young Adults" included moments of prayer, silence, song and testimonies. Taizé is a community of brothers that includes Protestants and Roman Catholics. It has developed its own style of music for meditation, using simple phrases, usually lines from the Psalms or other pieces of Scripture.

Brother Alois announced that the next European meeting would take place in Brussels, from Dec. 29, 2008 to Jan. 2, 2009, and that there would be a meeting for young adults from Africa in Nairobi in Nov. 2008.

As well as evening prayer at the Palexpo centre each evening, there were smaller meetings at churches throughout the city and at the Geneva headquarters of the World Council of Churches. Many Geneva streets thronged with young people during the period.

"It's an encouragement to see young people in Europe getting closer when some people say Europe is going through post-Christianity," WCC general secretary the Rev. Samuel Kobia told Taizé participants.

In his opening meditation, Brother Alois recalled that Brother Roger had left Geneva in 1940 to look for a place in France where he could found a Christian community.

The Geneva gathering was the 30th Taizé meeting of young adults from Europe. The first was in Paris over the 1978-1979 New Year, and the last before Geneva was held in the Croatian capital, Zagreb. The community said 40,000 people took part in the five-day Geneva gathering, 30,000 coming from outside Switzerland. The biggest grouping was from Poland, with more than 9,000 participants.

Some participants, however, like Isaac and Miho Arai and their two children came from as far as Sendai in Japan. "It looks like a long journey but to us its not a long journey," Isaac Arai told ENI, noting that this year is the third time the family has attended such a Taizé meeting in Europe. "We can meet and talk with so many young people from all over Europe and even from Africa and Asia. We feel so blessed."

Spying for the Allies (Part 4)

***Note**: This is part 3 of the continuing story of Pieter Strayer. Part 1,2 and 3 are in the Nov. 19, Dec. 3rd and Jan. 7th issues. To request previous articles, email ads@christiancourier.ca or phone 905-937-3314.*

German raids

The Germans began sending small squads of soldiers across to St. Philipsland in rubber boats to sabotage the Allies at night. They also sent squads to Noord-Beveland. We were living in Zierikzee at the time. One German soldier, an eighteen-year-old boy, would drop in on us every afternoon before he was going out on a raid, as if he was afraid he wasn't coming back.

I'd say, "I suppose you're going out tonight." But he wasn't allowed to talk about it, of course, and we understood that. So I would ask, "Are you going far?"

"No, not very far."

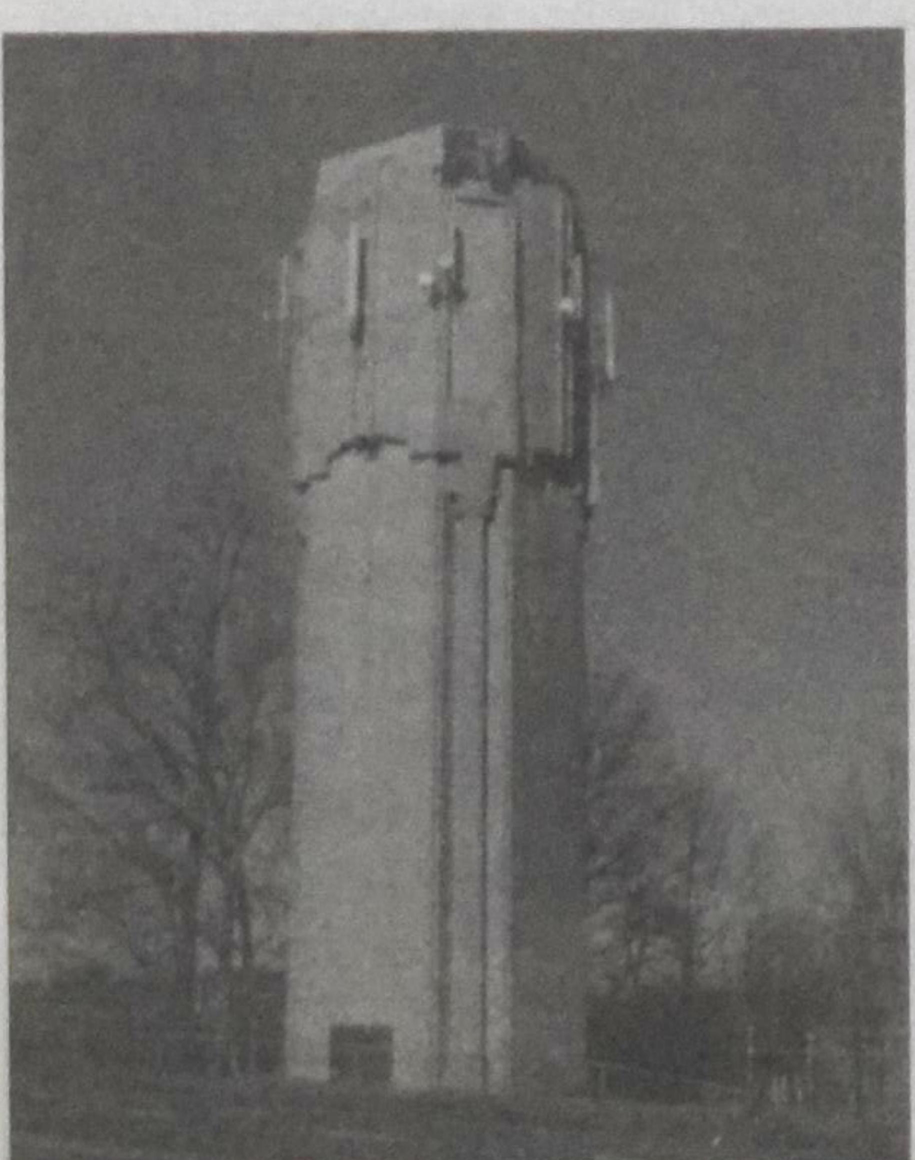
That meant they were going to Noord-Beveland. If he was going far, then they were striking in Zuid-Beveland or Walcheren.

Once they were going towards St. Philipsland, and Tonnie asked him, "Can you take along a letter? If you can't drop it in a mailbox somewhere, just drop it on the road. Someone will find it and deliver it." Her parents lived there with her sister. Whenever he went to St. Philipsland, the boy would drop off a letter, and it always arrived at its destination.

One night, the Germans went to St. Philipsland again. I went along in case there were wounded who had to be transported back. Two or three Englishmen were stationed in the water tower just behind the dike. It was their observation post. The Germans headed straight for the dike.

"They're in for it now," I thought, and waited near the dike for the fireworks to begin. But nothing happened. It was so light, I could see them climbing the dike on the other side. They approached the water tower, but not a shot was fired. The Germans blew the tower up and the English were killed. They had done nothing to defend themselves.

More English were in a barn owned by Dien's father-in-law, Mr. VanderRee, where they also housed a tank and weapons. These men went to hide in the attic. When the Germans discovered the stuff in the barn, they went searching for the English but Mr. VanderRee acted as if he didn't know a thing. The English didn't show their faces – a brave bunch! The only ones who shot at the Germans were underground people and they only had hunting rifles. The Germans were unaware that they were scared off by civilians and not the English.



Present day Watertower in St. Philipsland

Traitors

Dutch soldiers came home, as did the Marines at first but then the Marines had to report again and be taken prisoner of war. This was because they had fought so hard against the Germans. One Marine, by the name of Van Dyke, was in hiding. It happened that in the village of Haamstede we had a policeman who was friendly with the Germans as was his boss, the Officer of Justice. This policeman wanted to turn the Marine in, so he broke into Van Dyke's home to try to find letters, etc. that may give a clue of the Marine's whereabouts. He found letters to Van Dyke's wife but with no return address. Yet he knew that the wife must return messages so he started harassing her.

I heard that this was happening, and told an Armenian that we have to get rid of the policeman. He said he had the right man for the job. I asked him how he could do it since the policeman rarely walked the streets and certainly not at night. He said they could kill him even as he laid in bed beside his wife and she wouldn't even wake up. I knew this was true because an Armenian would check up on me to see if I came back after a risky job. He would come upstairs in the dead of night, feel that I was in bed and disappear again. Amazingly the floorboards didn't even squeak as they normally did when anyone else came up the stairs.

The night came when they were going to do it. I did not feel too comfortable about it so I said that I wanted to talk to the guy first. I told him to hold off for now but action would have to be taken if the policeman tried to arrest the Marine's wife.

After the war, complaints were filed against the policeman by both the underground and his colleagues. But because this man had supplied his boss, Van Minnen, the Minister of Justice, with butter, oil, and other hard to obtain items during the wartime, his boss did not act on the complaints. We lodged action against him in another district, but complaints from one province could not be tried in another. Under pressure, Van Minnen put the policeman under house arrest but he continued to receive his pay.

Sometime later, I came into contact with Van Minnen. It was at a trial for a guard accused of possession of a restricted gun. Van Minnen was the prosecutor. As Van Minnen began to speak, I interrupted and said, "I understand that you are against a guard having a gun but in the war you were always favouring friends of Germans so you would rather see NSBers with illegal weapons instead of guards."

The judge didn't know what was happening and asked if we knew each other. I said that I had never met him before but knew of him. It was tricky of course. Although we were fined sixty gilders, I felt better for speaking my mind. I never saw Van Minnen again.

Armenian courage

On the island, we were asked to form a resistance group and make plans for when the English would land to capture the Germans and so on. We did this but the English didn't come because there was not much of value on the island anymore. The other islands were occupied because they bordered on the seaway to Antwerp and that had to stay open for the ships to deliver materials to the battle zones.

Quite a few Armenians were taken prisoners by the Germans when they discovered that the Armenians were working against them. They were transported to Goeree -Overflakkee. At the time, I didn't know what became of them, but after the war I learned that they had been executed. One of the Armenians, although tied up, threw himself overboard. The Germans shot at him but he escaped.

The Armenians were friends you could trust. Once they accompanied me through a mine field. There were four of them, shoulder to shoulder, walking in front with Soeren and I about ten steps behind. They said that it wouldn't be so bad if they stepped on a mine but I was to stay alive.

Once I took someone other than Rademaker along. We were walking along a path towards the "watergate" in Renesse. All of a sudden, an Armenian had a knife to my partner's throat. The Armenians were hidden in the ditches, and, even though it was dark, they saw someone taller than me whom they didn't know. I said it was okay and so the fellow was let go. He never again went on a mission with me. However, I knew that even though I didn't see them, the Armenians were watching over me.

One night, while driving from Kerkwerve to Zierikzee, I saw a flash and heard a noise as a bullet hit the floorboard of the truck. The German sitting beside me only heard the noise and thought a stone hit the truck. The shot had come from a farmhouse that was surrounded by water. Later, I saw the bullet hole and wondered about who had fired the shot. But you could not get to the farm except by boat and whoever shot might do so again.

German soldiers on the dyke.

After the war, a crew came around collecting drowned animals and I asked them to search that particular farmhouse. They found a body close to the farm, and, by the clothes and skin, it was identified as an Armenian. He had an infected wound in his leg and must have tried to get our attention when he shot at the truck. I wondered if it was Soeren. It was to be forty-five years later that I found out to he was still alive.

Hiding from the Germans

Some men who did not want to go and work in Germany went into hiding. The Germans could go to the town hall and determine who was missing from the record books. So the secretary of the town of Renesse took the records with him and went into hiding. Others would go underground out of fear because they thought a German looked at them with suspicion. This was the case with the Jonker boys.

In December of 1944, Jaap and I went to Zierikzee to the home of Verbeek to celebrate his twenty-sixth birthday. He asked me to bring a message to the Jonker brothers to meet him at six o'clock the next evening at Renesse. They had contacted the English and they were sending a fishing boat to come to the dyke to pick them up.

I was against the plan because the Armenians guarded the dykes and the Germans would not believe it if they said they didn't see anything. So I said they had better be prepared to take the Armenians with them. The area between Zierikzee and Westenschouwen is in the shape of an arc and any signal would be seen from any point in that rounding. I refused to pass on the message as I was against their plan.

Despite my warning, a group of about ten went from Renesse to the dyke by Flauwers hidden in a wagon. And then they used light signals which were spotted by guards in Zierikzee. Other guards were sent to investigate. It took the two guards three-quarters of an hour to get there and by now the sun was starting to come up.

The people were hiding behind a pile of wood used to strengthen the dyke. A Ger-

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man guard stepped on one of the people who were hiding and they all ran. Despite the fact that the Dutch had grenades, they didn't use them. The Germans had their bikes parked on the other side of the road and their rifles were hanging on their bikes. If someone had used his head, he would have gone to the bikes and taken the rifles and the Germans would have been powerless. But nobody did and the Germans got their rifles and started to shoot.

On the other side of the dyke were two Englishmen and another Dutchman. The Englishmen were pilots and had been shot down. They were in hiding and had planned to get off the island along with the others. They heard the shooting and knew something had gone wrong and escaped to Zierikzee.

The Germans waited for reinforcements and six of those trying to escape ran into a house at the foot of the dyke. This was not a smart thing to do since the Germans just had to throw a hand grenade in the house and the Dutchmen came out. They were taken to prison. The secretary of Renesse was wounded and died a couple of days later. The people were transported to a bunker and the next day to Ouddorp on the island Over-Vlakkee; there they stood trial and were convicted. They were all sentenced to death. Their homes were burned along with all their possessions.

The men were taken back to Renesse, and on December 10th, 1944, they were hanged. It was Sunday morning and the minister was called away from the church service to pray with the prisoners and their families and they sang "A Mighty Fortress is Our God". Then they were taken on a farmer's wagon outside of town and hanged. The wives and children and parents all had to watch. Even the father of the two Jonker boys, who had a disease much like Alzheimers and didn't know what was going on, had to watch. Only two days had passed since the men had attempted to leave the island.

The same morning that the execution took place, Rademaker and I were called to see the Commander. We had wondered if the men may have given the Germans our names since they were probably questioned about the underground. So I said to Jaap we should put grenades on our pockets and we'll explode them if they try to take us prisoners. We would go down fighting.

Jaap said that they would have sent soldiers to get us if the men had talked. But the Germans knew that you could not escape, for then they would get back at you through your parents or brothers and sisters. The Germans knew you would rather give up than bring harm to your family.

Anyway, we ended up not taking any weapons into the office of the Commander. He told us that they are not afraid to execute people and warned us not to work against them. He also said we were to be prompt if they called for us: their wishes were to take priority over anything we may have to do. We were lucky to get away with a warning. Tonnie and Jaap's girlfriend were outside waiting anxiously for us. We waved to signal that all was fine. But you could never know for sure, since you couldn't trust the Germans or know what they were up to.

Pieter Strayer visiting the memorial to the men that were hanged in Renesse

Dangers from Allied shelling

In Zierikzee, food was distributed in the schools every day at noon. But often shells were fired from Noord-Beveland and they would explode just above our heads. The Allies were doing it to keep the Germans off the streets while we were getting the food. Later, I heard that the Allies asked boys that lived in the area to shoot off the shells. Of course, the boys considered it quite an honor to be able to shoot at the Germans. Once though, while staying in Zierikzee, we had a close call when a large shell landed in our bedroom. Sometimes, when the shooting sounded really close, we went downstairs and sat in a little cellar.

One day when they started shooting shells, I was walking in Haamstede with Koos VanderWerf. We were running behind the walls of the castle when Koos fell down. I said to get up but he did not move. We carried him into a house and took his shirt off. He was dead, yet the only mark on him was one drop of blood by the heart where the skin was broken. He was just thirty years old.

In another incident, the Germans called on several drivers to move landing-craft from Scharendyke to Ouwerkerk. These crafts were just large rubber rafts with a motor on them. The Germans didn't have much equipment left anymore. We picked the crafts up and transported them at night-time. A German Sergeant accompanied me, and I asked him where he had to go with them. He said to the Tommies.

The Germans wanted to make a defense from Schouwen to Tholen and go from there into Belgium. At the time I was not aware of the destination of the landing crafts so I asked if they had to go far. The sergeant said only about a fifteen minute trip. Thus I concluded that they were going to Tholen.

My truck was not running too well so in Zierikzee I told him I had to see a mechanic to get some tools or the truck will never make it. He bought this story, so I stopped and made contact with a person to relay the message to the English that six boats and about a hundred and forty soldiers were going to Tholen. He sent that message on right away and I did some minor repair on the truck.

We reached Ouwerkerk at two o'clock and the Germans planned to leave before dawn for their surprise attack. On my return trip, I stopped in Zierikzee to see if the message was received. The Allies, many of them Canadians, said that they would give the Germans a proper welcome. They would have never expected them on that night because it was Christmas Eve. The Germans celebrated "Weihnachten" and the Allies did too. So the soldiers were out dancing, and trucks had to be sent to the cafes to get them to the dyke by Tholen in time to greet the Germans. The next day I was scheduled to pick the boat up again. I met the same sergeant but there were only three boats to be picked up. The rest had been destroyed.

I said, "So you are back already". He grumbled about "those bloody spies". He said that they didn't even have a chance to reach the dyke – the allies knew they were coming. I had to chuckle to myself because this man complained about spies not knowing he was talking to one.

The good Germans

We went back to the old routine of distributing food on the island wherever the Germans were stationed. I had the help of a couple of boys one of whom was named Adolf. One time we drove through Haamstede and the little car of the Hauptman was standing beside the road. It was up on a jack and a wheel was off and put beside the car. Adolf asked if I could use the wheel but I said it was too small for the truck. He said that perhaps I could trade it for another one so he grabbed the wheel and put it on the truck. Then he pushed the car over and threw the jack on the truck too.

Our destination was the castle and there were a lot of bikes parked against the wall. They belonged to German soldiers but they had been stolen from us. Adolf said, "You have a brother in Germany, don't you?"

I said that I had two of them. Adolf took two bikes and put them in the truck so that my brothers would have bikes when they returned home. I asked him what will happen if a guard comes out and sees the bikes on the truck. He said not to worry – he'll take care of it. Both boys helping me were good guys.

Adolf had been on the French coast when

Continued on p.13

The one and the many in the mediation of salvation

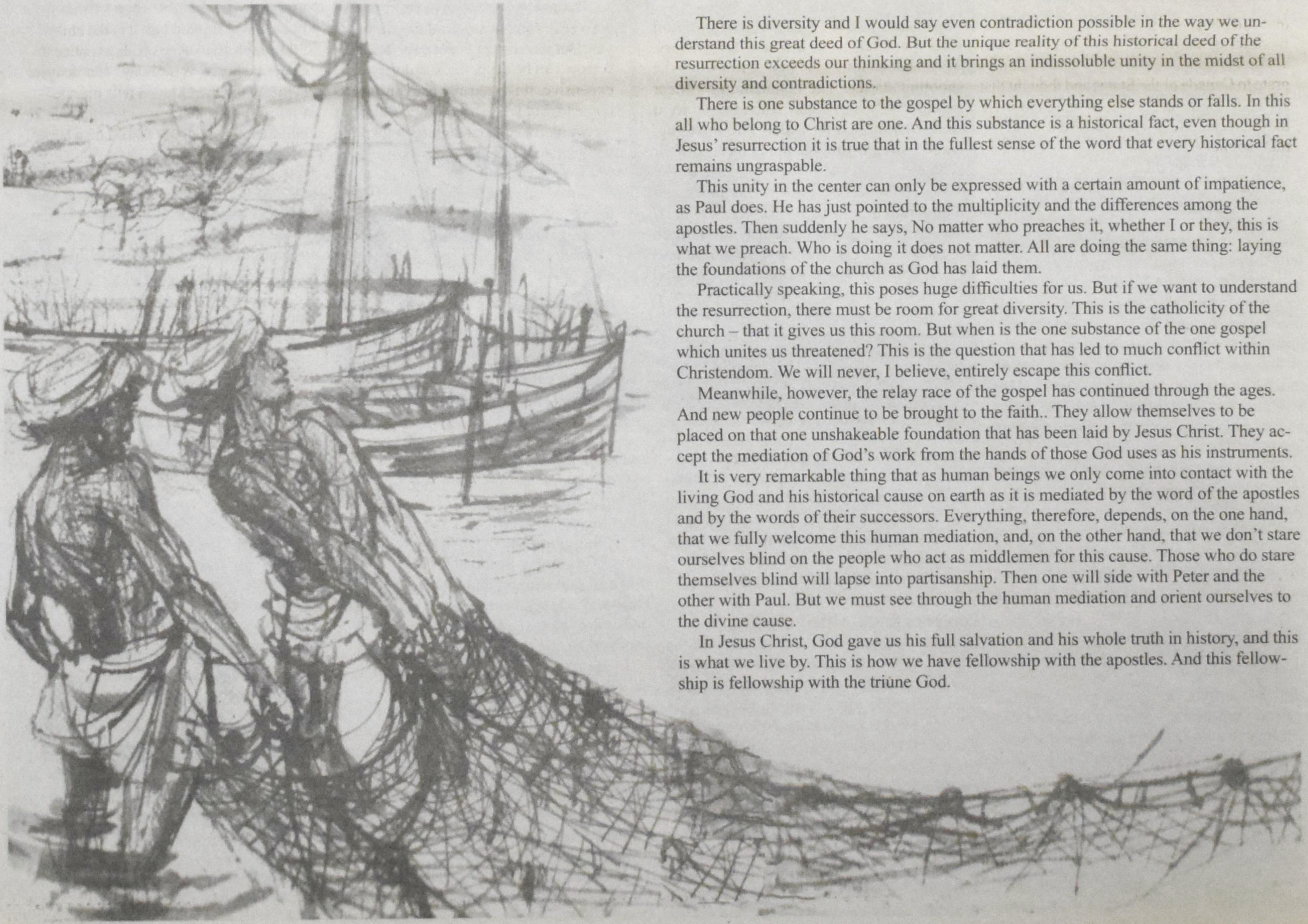
Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.
I Corinthians 15:11

A. A. van Ruler

In the preceding verses Paul pointed to the many eyewitnesses to Jesus' resurrection. But all of them stand in the tradition by which the truth – what God has done in Jesus Christ in history – is handed on from person to person and from generation to generation. All of them proclaim the same truth and by it more and more people are brought to faith. In this connection we must pay attention not only to the fact that there are many witnesses to the gospel but also that they are diverse.

This was so from the very beginning. The risen Lord appeared many times and in many different ways to his followers. One had one kind of experience with the Lord, and another a different experience. This diversity in the how and what of the disciples' experience of the resurrection reverberates in all directions in the New Testament. Paul, for example, is very aware of his difference in position and prestige from all the other apostles. And this continues throughout the ages.

There are different streams within the one Christendom. This is related to differences among persons. There are, after all, the mystical, the dogmatic, the prophetic, diaconal and many more types. We must remind one another and take it to heart that all these different types exist and that they ought to be part of Christendom. This diversity can in many ways give the impression of conflict, and we must take this into account. This diversity isn't just a beautiful and harmonious whole; it gives rise to many painful conflicts. And we must, therefore, keep our hearts open.



The fact that the Lord God brings such a diversity of instruments into being ought to astonish us. Here the order of grace displays a great deal of correspondence with the order of nature. Especially in the springtime we see everything flower according to its own nature – grass and flowers, shrubs and trees. The fact that everything flourishes in its own way lends to Spring its festive praise.

But there are many conflicts in the diversity of nature too. Nature is even cruel, we often say. Whatever the case, the sources of that conflict are buried deep in the reality of nature.

But this is what it has pleased God to do: he wants multiplicity and diversity. He wants individuals. He wants me to exist. Those who learn to rest in this God's good pleasure and thus joins in God's will – they exist truly. And they learn the peace of God that passes all understanding.

However, it is not just about multiplicity and diversity. In our test Paul is concerned with the other side. He says, "Whether, then, it was I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed." In other words, there is also a certain order in the multiplicity of God's doings and instruments. They stand in a single rank. They form a circle around a center. Or to use another image, there is only one torch that is handed on in the relay race of the gospel. And the gospel is the message about what God has done in Jesus Christ in history. The center is, of course, the resurrection.

It is here that the multiplicity of Christendom begins. But it is at the same time the unity of Christendom. Those who begin to challenge and distort the resurrection lay their hands on the heart and core of the gospel, and they are engaged in undoing everything God has done.

There is diversity and I would say even contradiction possible in the way we understand this great deed of God. But the unique reality of this historical deed of the resurrection exceeds our thinking and it brings an indissoluble unity in the midst of all diversity and contradictions.

There is one substance to the gospel by which everything else stands or falls. In this all who belong to Christ are one. And this substance is a historical fact, even though in Jesus' resurrection it is true that in the fullest sense of the word that every historical fact remains ungraspable.

This unity in the center can only be expressed with a certain amount of impatience, as Paul does. He has just pointed to the multiplicity and the differences among the apostles. Then suddenly he says, No matter who preaches it, whether I or they, this is what we preach. Who is doing it does not matter. All are doing the same thing: laying the foundations of the church as God has laid them.

Practically speaking, this poses huge difficulties for us. But if we want to understand the resurrection, there must be room for great diversity. This is the catholicity of the church – that it gives us this room. But when is the one substance of the one gospel which unites us threatened? This is the question that has led to much conflict within Christendom. We will never, I believe, entirely escape this conflict.

Meanwhile, however, the relay race of the gospel has continued through the ages. And new people continue to be brought to the faith.. They allow themselves to be placed on that one unshakeable foundation that has been laid by Jesus Christ. They accept the mediation of God's work from the hands of those God uses as his instruments.

It is very remarkable thing that as human beings we only come into contact with the living God and his historical cause on earth as it is mediated by the word of the apostles and by the words of their successors. Everything, therefore, depends, on the one hand, that we fully welcome this human mediation, and, on the other hand, that we don't stare ourselves blind on the people who act as middlemen for this cause. Those who do stare themselves blind will lapse into partisanship. Then one will side with Peter and the other with Paul. But we must see through the human mediation and orient ourselves to the divine cause.

In Jesus Christ, God gave us his full salvation and his whole truth in history, and this is what we live by. This is how we have fellowship with the apostles. And this fellowship is fellowship with the triune God.

Memiors

Resistance *...continued from page 11*

Canadian soldiers with gun-tractor which skidded off the road on the flooded island.

the Allies landed. He and another soldier had made an agreement that they would surrender as soon as they could. They wanted to immigrate to Canada or the States and thought that surrendering would give them the chance. So they stayed behind when the rest of the German soldiers went on. They put down their weapons and put their hands on their heads. A Canadian soldier came and saw they didn't have any way of defending themselves. So he picked up their rifles and gave them back. He didn't want to take any prisoners and he sent them to follow after the other Germans.

By this time, many German soldiers were disappointed by the behavior of their superiors. Adolf was in France with a lieutenant who was later given a medal for bravery. This lieutenant was the first to run when the shooting started. The commanding officer was always given credit when things went well even though they didn't do anything. Before long, many lost the respect of their soldiers.

On June 6, 1944, the Allies landed in Normandy and by early September, Paris had been liberated. The Allies now wanted to close in on Germany and get a foothold on the lower Rhine by taking the bridges at Arnhem and Nijmegen. A massive airborne attack was launched. Five thousand planes flew overhead as well as gliders. But they were not successful in taking the bridges and many lost their lives. The success of the Germans to retain this area gave them a boost and a stalemate developed through the fall of 1944.

The gliders used by the Allies were connected by a cable to another plane and they carried equipment for use by the paratroopers once they were on the ground. I remember one glider which was forced to land when the Germans shot the cable to pieces. One German was ordered to go to the glider and make the arrest but the English made sure he could not get near. So the Germans sent an Armenian who did things differently. He showed that he wasn't armed and the pilot let him in the glider. They surrendered when he lit a match and told them he would set the plane of fire. He did and the crew had to go out and surrender. The Armenian then gave me the revolver and holster belonging to the pilot. This pilot was the Canadian, Lt. Hall, who shortly thereafter, stepped on a mine and was killed.

Bombed church Nijmegen

The Canadians land

It was hard for us to get news of the developments of the war. Finally, in January, the Canadians landed on the dykes of Schouwen. I could not understand how they did it until after the war and I had immigrated to Canada. I talked with a contractor who had served with the Lincoln and Welland Regiment. I asked how they could land on the dunes when they were booby trapped with mines and grenades. He said that they took boards and placed them over the small poles which connected the explosives. Then they just walked on the boards.

The Verton family lived close to where the Canadians landed. These people were taken to be questioned about German activity on the island. A man by the name of John Netsel, whom I worked for here in Canada, had been with the Canadian forces at that time and told me about this incident. The Vertons couldn't speak English and the Canadians couldn't speak Dutch so they had to be taken to someone who could translate. The two children were wrapped in blankets and taken along. They didn't know what was happening.

After they released the family, Mr. Ver-

See **Resistance** *page 15*

My window seat

Mendelt Hoekstra

The end and the beginning

About this time last year I took a bit of time off from writing this column to take care of my family. One journey has ended. A whole different one has begun. Marisa, my dear wife of almost 10 years, died on December 6, almost one year after being diagnosed with cancer. I don't know if it is unfair or not, but it surely is unnatural to be a widow with three kids at the age of 33.

I heard someone once say that he was very happy to be there when his sister died. Well, I was blessed to be there when Marisa lived.

People have asked me, "Can you really go through all this and still believe?" They have asked, "God sounds good and all, but have you not heard of science?" They have written, "When all goes wrong can you really stand before the Lord of song with nothing on your tongue but Hallelujah?"

The answer for me is twofold. The answer is complicated and the answer is yes. But the answer is not easy because sorrow can be deep, thick and very expensive. It is a terribly hard answer to come to, but when Marisa and I thought we wouldn't have enough faith for yet another bad test result, we were given what we needed.

A woman came to me in the line at the visitation and said that she didn't know that Mendelt had such faith. Well, Mendelt didn't either.

Marisa doesn't have cancer anymore.

I wonder if way back in history, before clocks kept time and before the world was created that Marisa and I were meant to be together. I like to think so. I recently looked at our wedding picture. I first wished that I would have been able to warn that young Mendelt. To warn him that after nine years of kingdom building lives, cancer would try and drive a hole through us. That he would have to watch his best friend die. That he would have to tell their three children that Mommy went to heaven. That he would have to try and steer a 5, 3, and 1-year-old through denial, anger, acceptance, sorrow, confusion and regained joy. That he would find out that the cross, grace and eternal life mean very little to a five-year-old when his mom isn't coming back.

Jesus died when he was 33. Marisa died when she was 33. Jesus inspired people and sent out his disciples. Marisa inspired as well. Marisa's disciples aren't Matthew, James, Luke and so on, but they are our children Zion, Jacoba and Zekijah. They are like that woman in Minnesota that has never met Marisa but told her that she has changed her life. She is Marisa's good friend, and though they might not talk or connect for a few weeks, when they came back together, Marisa's friend told her that Marisa has always inspired her. It is the almost 300 people that came on short notice to celebrate her 33rd birthday. Her disciple is me, who when Marisa tells me she is afraid of another woman raising her children, I can tell her that Marisa herself will raise our kids through me.

Cancer didn't beat Marisa. About 2000 years ago Jesus beat cancer. Jesus beat everything else. For Marisa. For you. For me.

I spent 2007 holding Marisa as she shone every day. I held her as she shone and I held her as she died. Sorrow is deep. So is the Father's love. Pain and grief are vast. But love is beyond all measure. Shine on Marisa, shine on.

Mendelt D. Hoekstra is the founder and director of the Music Therapy program at Bethesda, an organization owned and operated by the Mennonite Brethren Conference of Ontario, that supports adults with developmental possibilities. He lives in Vineland, ON with their three children.

Welcome to my perch
Bert Witvoet

Ian Smith's *Bitter Harvest:* A tragic outcome for Zimbabwe

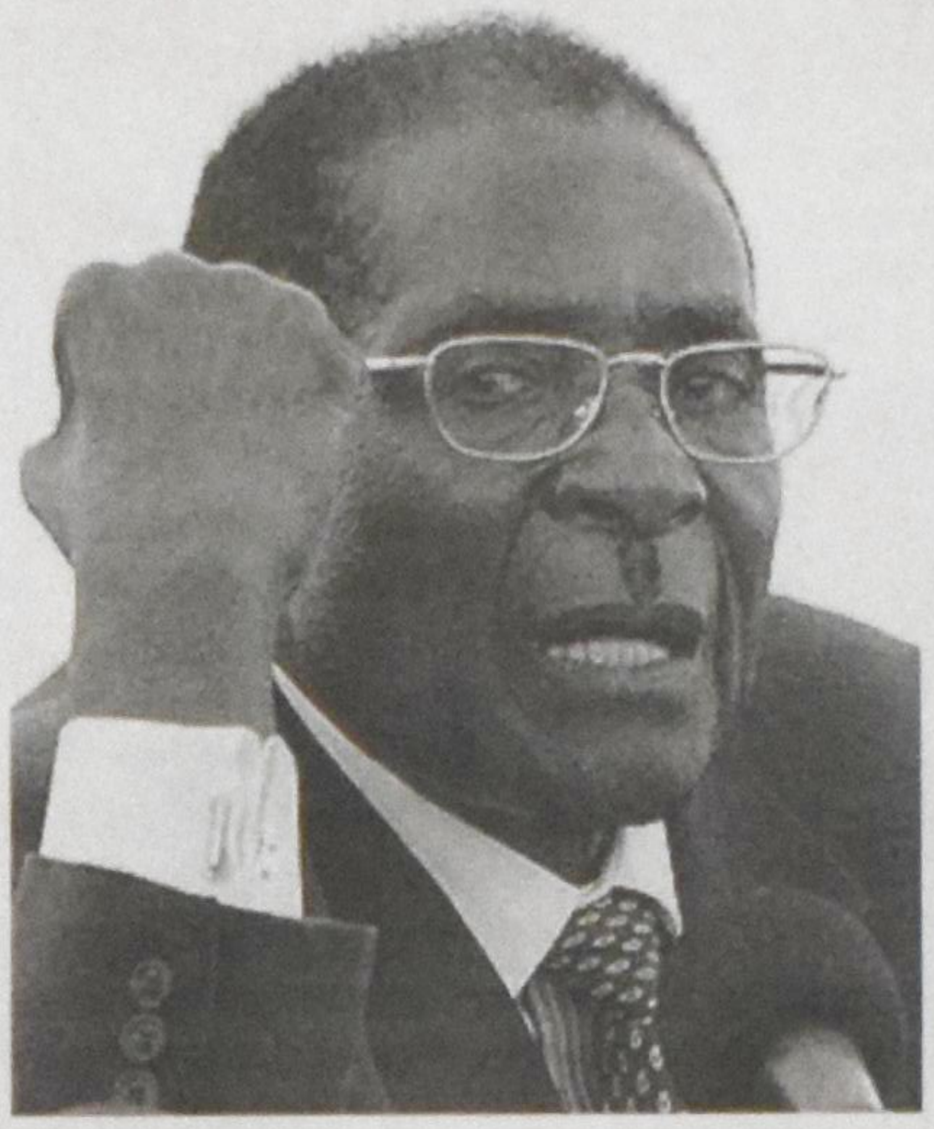
Ian Smith, who for 15 years was prime minister of Rhodesia (now known as Zimbabwe) died two months ago – November 20 – at age 88. A news story covering his life and death reported that he had been a controversial figure. Some people labeled him a racist; others respected him as a straight shooter who sought to do what was best for his country. Later in his life, as conditions in his country started to degenerate, Ian Smith's reputation began to improve. After all, he had foreseen what would happen to his beloved country if the communists under Robert Mugabe would gain power through intimidation and fraud. Up to the end of his life, people, black and white, would stop him on the street and line up to shake his hand. Smith once boasted that if he and Mugabe would walk into a slum area, one of them would not come out alive, and it wasn't going to be Ian Smith.

I decided to read a book he had written and which was entitled *Bitter Harvest: The Great Betrayal and the Dreadful Aftermath*. The only problem was that the book was not available in any of the St. Catharines public libraries. It took a two-week long search through the interlibrary loan system before a copy was found in the Kitchener public library system. I have an idea that Smith's revelations are not all that popular in Canada. Although it's a hefty volume with fairly small print, I set myself down to read it early in the new year.

A sad tale

As the title indicates, the book is about a disastrous development in the history of Zimbabwe. It is an historical and autobiographical account of how Ian Smith tried to keep his country from falling into the hands of revolutionary forces. He managed to stave off those forces for 15 years. In spite of his efforts and those of his compatriots, the communist under Mugabe managed to take over the government, and their ruthless and corrupt policies subsequently ran Zimbabwe into the ground. What used to be known as the bread-basket of Central Africa has now become its worst basket case, with inflation running as high as 4,000 percent.

When Mugabe came to power, Smith offered to help him, an offer that Mugabe at first eagerly accepted. But as soon as Smith indicated his opposition to policies that would, in his opinion, harm the country, Mugabe rejected him. Eventually Mugabe kicked him and other whites out of parliament and even took away his citizenship, although Smith was born in Zimbabwe. He threatened to put Smith on trial for attempted genocide. Smith dared him to go ahead. Rather than flee Zimbabwe to avoid persecution, Smith was determined to stay in Zimbabwe.



Road to democracy

Rhodesia under Smith's government was a fairly enlightened place that did not fall into the trap of Apartheid, like its southern neighbor, South Africa. In April 1964, Ian Smith came to power and pledged to seek independence from Britain, something that Britain had promised on numerous occasions. When Britain kept on reneging, Smith led his country into a Unilateral Declaration of Independence on November 11, 1965. His move set in motion years of sanctions against Rhodesia.

The Rhodesians were working towards a one man, one vote system that would enfranchise blacks alongside the white population. But in order to avoid the disasters that were taking place in neighboring countries, where control was wrested from the hands of a colonial government in a revolutionary manner, Rhodesia wanted to follow a historically responsible manner of gradually empowering its mostly illiterate black population. Ian Smith, for one, preferred a meritorious democracy in which people would be enfranchised according to their ability to understand the rudiments of a modern democracy. Without that understanding, he feared, they would fall prey to the coercive forces of power-hungry dictators. He was proven right.

Betrayed by friends

As I read the book, I sensed what Ian Smith meant by the "Great Betrayal" part of the title. Rhodesia used to be a British colony, and its white population was extremely proud of their connection with Britain. Smith, whose father had come from Scotland, fought as a pilot in the British Royal Air Force during the Second World War. But their greatest friend, Great Britain, worked against what, according to Smith and his friends, was best for Rhodesia. The Brits wanted to appease the revolutionary forces in Africa. As Smith explains: "Some leading world countries had a guilt complex because of the part their ancestors had played in colonialism, and they jumped at every opportunity to use the white man in Africa as a sacrificial offering to salve their consciences." When you read how Britain acted toward Rhodesia, you would have to conclude that they were totally devious and two-faced in their dealings with their former colony. Smith from time to time refers to Britain as "Perfidious Albion." It must be said also that countries like Canada and the U.S. were not helpful either.

But there was another party that eventually turned on Rhodesia, and that was their long-time friend South Africa. The white government under Vorster clearly threw their neighbouring country to the international wolves in the hope that they, champions of Apartheid, would escape judgment, which proved to be naïve, to say the least. And this at a time when the South African government knew that Apartheid would not work. South Africa used Rhodesia's security concerns and financial needs, which they could alleviate as a senior and more powerful ally, as a form of blackmail to put pressure on the Rhodesians.

The dreadful aftermath

Reading Smith's book about Zimbabwe made me realize that a well-run, prosperous country can falter and lose most of its precious advantages that took years to develop. When Robert Mugabe "won" the election in 1980, he said to Ian Smith, "We cannot get over how fortunate we are inheriting this jewel of Africa, with its expertise, professionalism, technical know-how, infrastructure, the bread-basked to Central Africa, and the skilled technicians who keep the wheels running." Today, the country is bankrupt and opponents of the government are assaulted, raped, tortured and murdered. Thousands have fled the country. Mugabe has shown himself to be evil incarnate.

International diplomacy is fraught with hypocritical opportunism. It's a miracle that some countries manage to survive the onslaught of stupidity and dishonesty. Ideology, too, plays a big role and has a habit of skewing the picture. The world of international relations is full of empty rhetoric and deceit. Citizens and sometimes nations are often betrayed by those they least suspect. It's best not to be too naïve about international politics. I was also reminded that the news media accounts about other countries are often slanted and unreliable.

What does the Bible say again? Don't put your confidence in princes!

Bert Witvoet is the former editor of CC, now retired, who stays active by editing the Christian Educators Journal *and preaching the occasional sermon.*

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James VanderLaan
Development & Campaign Director
Redeemer University College
1-877-779-0913 ext. 4522
jvanderlaan@redeemer.ca

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CELEBRATING 25 YEARS 1982–2007

Resistance...continued from page 13

ton went to the rationing office of the town where they had been taken. The clerk in the office wanted to see his ration card but Verton explained that he didn't have a chance to get his papers before they were taken away. The clerk wouldn't give him food coupons without his ration card so the Verdons had a lot of trouble getting food. Even though the Allies later gave them a document stating that they were indeed taken from their home in a hurry, this clerk refused to give them coupons and the Verdons had to rely on others. This happened in January and it wasn't until after the liberation, in May, that the Verdons could return to their home on the island.

In February and March we still did some driving for the Germans. You heard a lot of stories and you tried to get information from the radio about Allied advances. Also we were nervous because we heard stories that the Germans were looking for us. One time there were two officers talking together in the cab of my truck. They were discussing how their plans always seemed to go wrong like with the attempted landing in Tholen. It seemed to them that there was quite a bit of spying going on.

They had been told to look for a guy who had been a truck driver and whose code name was Piet. Well they had something right anyway. I pointed out that I was a truck driver and my name was Piet, but they said it couldn't be me since Piet was my real name and they were after someone who used the name as an alias. They knew that underground workers generally went by code names.

Another time I picked up an officer. On route to Zierikzee, he asked me if I was spying for the Tommies. I said, "I sure am." I thought I had better tell him straight out since he asked so nicely. Then he said, "You're crazy!" and took my answer as a joke. I knew that if I had panicked and grabbed for my gun, I would be a goner, so it was good that he took my answer lightly.

Amphibious vehicles taking Canadians across the Scheldt in Zeeland, 1944.

I carried a gun in my coveralls. One time it almost my undoing. I had a load of ammunition to take to the dike by Sas, where there was a fruit farm below the dike. I was on top of the dike with the truck and the cases of ammunition. Soldiers walked from below to the top of the dike and back down with the cases. I was bending down to pick up a crate, when the button of my coveralls came undone and my gun and holster was suddenly hanging down in front of my nose. I thought for a moment, "this is not good", but the soldier I was handing the crates to didn't look up and the other soldier was still in the farmhouse. I quickly hid the revolver in between some stuff that was staying on the truck and got the next crate ready to hand over.

These are some of the things that happened that made you very afraid, not only for yourself but also for what they would do to your family. This time it ended well. So many times in the war, you were amazingly spared, and a fast "shot of prayer", as the Catholics would say, helped. You knew that your life was always in the hand of your Creator. That you could never forget.

Pieter and Toni Strayer visit war memorial in Walcheren.

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Classifieds

Anniversaries

Berghuizen Dr. 1948 | January 30 | Drayton Ontario, 2008

The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want. Psalm 23

With great joy and thankfulness to our Lord
we are happy to announce the **60th Wedding Anniversary**
of our dear parents, grandparents & great-grandparents.

Lucas and Lammigje Mulder (nee Steenbergen)

We are thankful and praise God for his faithfulness
to our parents for these years, and it is our prayer
that God will continue to bless and keep them in his care.
Congratulations Dad & Mom, Opa & Oma

With love: Ralph & Mary Mulder, *Wainfleet, Ont.*
Fred & Aly Mulder, *Brucefield, Ont.*
Pete & Birg Mulder, *Leduc, Alberta*
Tony & Jane Mulder, *Drayton, Ont.*
Harry & Margaret Mulder, *Moorefield, Ont.*
Luke & Willeke Mulder, *Arthur, Ont.*
Tina & Henry Valkenburg, *Blackstock, Ont.*
Tim & Cheryl Mulder, *Wroxeter, Ont.*
Arnold & Sharon Mulder, *Moorefield, Ont.*

37 grandchildren (Lisa †2003) and 21 great-grandchildren

To celebrate this special occasion family & friends
are invited to an **Open House** on Saturday Feb. 2, 2008
from 2-4 p.m. at the Moorefield Community Centre.

Home address: Apt 33 - 81 Wood St, Drayton ON N0G 1P0

Willem and Paula (Mast) Vandermeer

Celebrated their **65th Wedding Anniversary** on January 14, 2008.

Congratulations and love from your family:
Nick & Ann Vandermeer, Ary & Martha Vandermeer, Pim & Evelyn Boekestyn,
grandchildren and great-grandchild.

We are grateful for God's faithfulness and blessings over the years.

Address: Holland Christian Homes, Hope Tower Apt 705-7900 McLaughlin Rd S, Brampton ON L6V 3N2

Obituaries

Trijintje "Tryn" Speyers (Pronk)

October 19, 1913 - December 18, 2007

In Kingston after 94 years, Tryn (Oma to many) has peacefully and joyfully gone to be with Jesus, her precious Saviour. She will be greatly missed by her daughter Kathleen and son-in-law Dr. David Hurst, and her grandchildren Andrew (Maxine), Jonathan, Timothy and Rachel all of Kingston, with whom she has lived for the past 23 years. Also cherished mother to Al (Ada) of Ottawa, Frank (Bonnie) of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Ed (Linda) of Holland, Michigan; and Oma to Ed (Kelly), Joel (Leslie), Warren and Deanna; Josh (Hannah) and Jonny; and David and Mark.

Born in Stadskanaal, Groningen, the Netherlands on October 19, 1913, Trijn Pronk was the second of seven children. Her father was an architect, mason and builder. When the Depression hit the Netherlands and most construction work stopped, her parents sent her away at the tender age of 17 to earn a living for the family. She became a nanny for not one but five Jewish families, for whom she washed, cooked, cleaned and cared for the children. In 1940 when the war broke out they came to her for assistance and she helped to hide them from the Nazis. All of them survived.

In 1955 her husband immigrated to Canada and she followed him there in 1956 with her own four children. Transplanted into a strange land she took in strangers, cleaned homes of millionaires and helped put bread on her family's table.

Her passion was to sing in a choir. Not just any choir. Preferably a church choir. A choir that invariably ended up singing the Hallelujah chorus. For her it was simply dress rehearsal. She loved her siblings and country that she left behind as much as she loved her children and the country that she adopted. Here she raised her four children and nurtured her twelve grandchildren, always hearkening them to seek their utmost for God's highest.

For fifty-one years she laboured in this land striving hard to win the prize: Singularly living out the high call of giving pleasure to the God of the Bible whom she knew as her Heavenly Father. She knew to whom she belonged. It was her only comfort in both life and death. Toward the end she longed for him and going home to where he lived; she yearned to put on immortality and to rest in the bosom of him who loves her and gave his life for her. For her to live was Christ and to die was gain.

Correspondence: 207- 85 Ontario St, Kingston ON K7L 5V7

Drachten, Holland | Grimsby, Ontario
July 6, 1927 | January 3, 2008

I lift up my eyes to the hills –
where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.

John Vis

went home to be with the Lord

Beloved husband of Ietje for 52 yrs.
Loving father of:
Dirk & Margaret Vis of *Newcastle, Ontario*
Theresa & Bill Van Oenen of *Wainfleet, Ontario*
Lucy & Ed Vermeulen of *London, Ontario*
Wilfred & Heather Vis of *Thunder Bay, Ontario*
Ken & Nancy Vis of *Barnwell, Alberta*
Also survived by 20 grandchildren.

Correspondence address: Apt 519-275 Main St
Grimsby ON L3M 5N8

January 11,1914 | January 9, 2008
Koekange | Brampton

Klaas Fluit

"The Lord is my Shepherd"

Peacefully at Holland Christian Homes, in the arms of his Saviour, and family at his side, the Lord took home his child Klaas Fluit in his 94th year.
He is gone to join our Mom.

Beloved father of: Bert & Dianne, *Ayr*
Ralph & Ann, *Scarborough*
Andries & Aileen, *London*
Henry & Ann, *Cambridge*
Roy, *Missisauga*
Sue & Ian Talsma, *Brampton*
Dear grandfather of 16 grandchildren
and 8 great-grandchildren.
Also survived by sister Tina Batterink of Grimsby.

A Special Thank you to Rev. Bylstra of HCH.

Correspondence may be forwarded to: 19 Fern Street
Brampton ON L6Y 1X3

Hempens, Fryslân | Grimsby, Ontario
20 December 1915 | 11 December 2007

John (Jouke) Kramer

For everything there is a season,
and a time for every matter under heaven.
Ecclesiastes 3:1

Born in Advent 1915 and died during Advent 2007; John Kramer left this earthly life of 92 years to be with his loving Creator while his wife Tena and daughter Peg were at his side.

We remember Dad's love of hymns, singing bass and playing the harmonica. It pleased him to plant and harvest: his garden never failed to produce potatoes and beans. We were inspired by Dad's enjoyment of each sunrise, sunset, and the ever-changing shapes of crops, grass and trees even as he accepted the unpredictable changes in the weather.

For years Dad was active in the Jarvis Christian Reformed Church. He was an avid supporter of Christian education, and was involved in setting up Jarvis Christian School and Hamilton District Christian High School.

John/Heit/Pake is remembered by Tena his wife for 68 years, by their 9 children and spouses; by their 21 grandchildren and spouses and their 10 great-grandchildren.

Dad was predeceased by a son Oane (†1944), and four brothers in Fryslân, the Netherlands.

Tena Kramer-Elgersma

Jack (*Schomberg, ON*) – Jeannette, John, Jerry, Jeffrey
Anne (*Vancouver, BC*) – Kristine, Eric
Andy & Agnes (*Hamilton, ON*) – Anna, Steffen, Ilse
Gertie & Wayne (*Smithville, ON*) – Kristin, Amy, Paul
Joe & Jenny (*Victoria, BC*) – Sjoukje, Alicia, Reuben
Peg & Dave (*Cleveland, OH*) – Sara, Jonathan
Grace (*Guelph, ON*) – Michiel
Dirk & Anneke (*Ingersoll ON*) – Miriam, Justine, Evan
Nynke & Roy (*Oshawa, ON*)

A memorial service in honor of Dad's life
was held on Saturday 15 December 2007,
at Ingersoll Christian Reformed Church.

Correspondence address: Tena Kramer, Room 417
Shalom Manor, 12 Bartlett Ave, Grimsby ON L3M 4N5

Classifieds

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Or you can contact the Search Committee Chair, **Rudy Eikelboom** at **reikelboom@wlu.ca**

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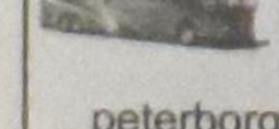

E-mail peterborgdorff@comcast.net or swee@calvin.edu

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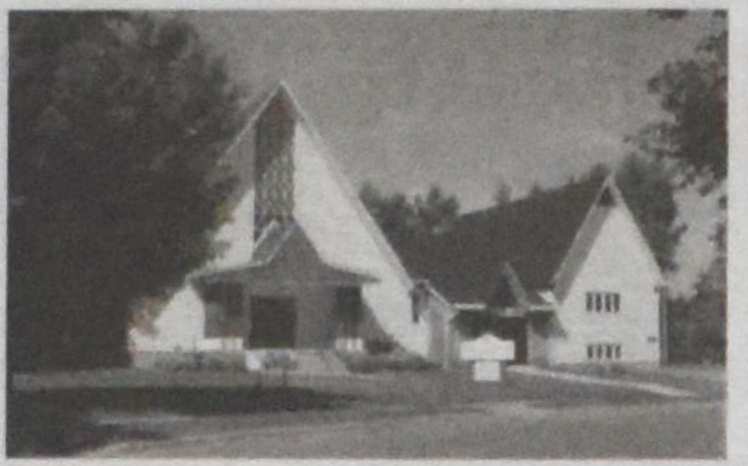

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Did you know that the Fredericton CRC, with 107 professing members and 42 families, is in a period of transition and rebuilding?

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You can call Dave van Berkel, Search Committee Chair, at **506-451-1913** or email **search@FrederictonCRC.com** for more information and a church profile.

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Mutual Support Systems of the Niagara Region, a non-profit agency providing residential care and treatment for children invites applications for the position of House Parents. An ideal career choice for a married couple to work together in meaningful ministry, these are full-time, salaried, live-in positions for both partners. Our House Parents are the heart and soul of the Mutual Support program. See our web site for more program information.

Please contact: Randy Klassen
Associate Director-Human Resources
792 Canboro Rd.
Fenwick ON L0S 1C0 Tel: 905 892 4332
rklassen@mutualsupport.net www.mutualsupport.net

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Tollendale Village

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Executive Director

Responsibilities include the senior management of Tollendale Village including effective delivery of all programs and services to a current population of approximately 400 seniors, and senior leadership of a new 160 bed Nursing Home. In addition this individual will also be responsible for the strategic and operational leadership as well as the financial direction of the facility and implementation of Board policy decisions

As we are an inter-denominational Christian Retirement Community with over 400 residents, candidates should be comfortable relating to seniors from a variety of Christian backgrounds.

At least 10 years of leadership and management experience in a Senior's Facility is a pre-requisite.

For more information about our Facility please visit our website at www.tollendalevillage.ca .

Please submit your resume along with cover letter, by February 15th, 2008 to: **D. VanLeusen, Board Secretary**
274 Hurst Drive
Barrie, ON, L4N 7Y7

Fax:705-722-7359 Email: debvanleusen@hotmail.com

No applications in person please. *We thank all those who respond; however only those selected for an interview will be contacted.*

DIRECTOR OF SECONDARY PROGRAMS

OACS

The Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS), Ontario's oldest and largest independent school organization representing 80 non-denominational Christian schools, is seeking to appoint a suitable candidate for the position of Director of Secondary Programs.

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A detailed job description is available on our website at www.oacs.org/webservices/jobs.

If you have experience in teaching and administration in OACS and/or CSI schools and want to join an established professional organization, please send your inquiries and/or resumes to:

Dr. A. Guldemond, Executive Director
Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools
617 Garner Road, E.,
Ancaster ON L9G 3K9
Tel. 905.648.2100 Fax: 905.648.2110

Informal inquiries can be made to the Executive Director at adriang@oacs.org

Application Deadline: January 31, 2008

www.oacs.org

Please see page 22 for Dordt College job listing

Classifieds

Dordt College

Dordt College invites applications for the position of

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Candidates should have a Bachelor's Degree in Theater or compatible amount of education and experience. A Master's Degree would be preferred. Strong organizational skills and the ability to work with multiple demands simultaneously are desired. Candidates should possess a knowledge of lighting, sound and visual systems, including theatrical systems. A knowledge of recording and editing software is also desired. We are also looking for someone with theatrical construction skills and the ability to read and generate drawings and blueprints. Candidates should have the ability to work flexible hours during events which will include some evenings and weekends

A review of applications received will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled. Enthusiastic Christians with a commitment to the Reformed faith are invited to send a detailed letter of application, current resume, at least three professional references, and copies of your college transcripts to:

Susan Droog, Director of Human Resources, Dordt College
498 Fourth Ave. NE, Sioux Center, IA 51250
Phone: (712) 722-6011; Fax: (712) 722-1198
Email: sdroog@dordt.edu

Dordt College does not discriminate as to age, sex, national origin, marital status or against those who are disabled.

Elim Investment Opportunities

ELIM Village

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Smithers – CFBV	9:15 am	1230
Vernon – CJIB	9:30 pm	94
ALBERTA		
Brooks – CIBQ	8:30 am	1340
Edmonton – CJCA	6:00 pm	930
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Winnipeg – CKJS	9:00 am	810
ONTARIO		
Atikokan – CFAK	9:30 am	1240
Chatham – CFCO	6:30 am	630
Hamilton – CHAM	7:30 am	820
London – CKSL	7:00 am	1410
Owen Sound – CFOS	7:00 am	560
Sarnia – CHOK	7:30 am	1070
Stratford – CJCS	8:45 am	1240
Wingham – CKNX	10:30 am	920
Woodstock – CJFH	7:30 am	94.03
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PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND		
Charlottetown – CFCY	7:00 am	630
NOVA SCOTIA		
Digby – CKDY	6:00 am	1420
Halifax – CFDR	8:30 am	780
Liverpool – CKBW	7:30 am	94.5
Kentville – CKEN	8:30 am	1490
Middleton – CKAD	8:30 am	1350
Shelburne – CKBW	7:30 am	93.1
Sydney – CJCB	7:00 am	1270
Weymouth – CKDY	8:30 am	103.1
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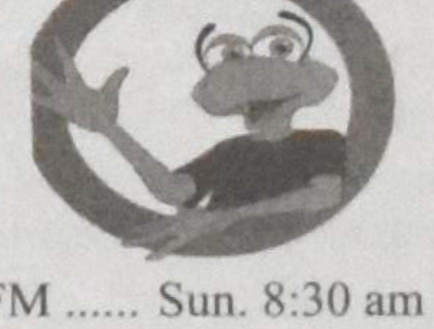

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Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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Feb 15-17 Marriage encounter weekend in **Niagara Falls**, ON. For more information or to register on-line, go to **www.reformedme.org** or contact Chris & Cindy Otten at 519-393-5163 or by email at Ontario_Registration@reformedme.org.

April 19, 20 Maranatha CRC, **Cambridge** 50th anniversary. Celebrations and special events will be held on Saturday April 19 at 7 p.m. and Sunday April 20 during the 10 a.m. service.

May 2-4 Marriage encounter weekend in **London**, ON. For more information or to register on-line, go to **www.reformedme.org** or contact Chris & Cindy Otten at 519-393-5163 or by email at Ontario_Registration@reformedme.org.

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Jeremiah 29:11

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Why the era of cheap food is over

Corn, milk, bread, and other farm products hit record high prices in 2006 – and will likely keep rising in 2008. Food prices worldwide hit record highs in 2006, and all the signs are that they will go on rising this year, and for the foreseeable future. The era of cheap food, the experts say, is over and we are going to have to get used to it. This is easier said than done for millions around the world, as evidenced by protests in Mexico over the cost of corn tortillas, and in Italy last September about the price of (wheat) pasta. Christian Science Monitor writer Peter Ford looks at why.

Tens of thousands of workers and farmers filled this Mexico City's central square a year ago to protest spiraling food prices. Some protesters handed out ears of corn to workers and farmers.

What is behind the increases in food prices?

Certainly not bad harvests. Although a drought hit the traditionally bountiful Australian wheat harvest this past year, world cereal harvests hit 2.1 billion metric tons, a record production level, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Two major trends have been pushing prices up faster than they have risen for more than 30 years. One is that increasingly prosperous consumers in India and China are not only eating more food but eating more meat. Animals have to be fed (grains, usually) before they are butchered. The other is that more and more crops – from corn to palm nuts – are being used to make biofuels instead of feeding people.

At the same time, the world is drawing down its stockpiles of cereal and dairy products, which makes markets nervous and prices volatile.

The result, says Joachim von Braun, who heads the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in Washington, is that "the world food system is in trouble. The situation has not been this much of a concern for 15 years."

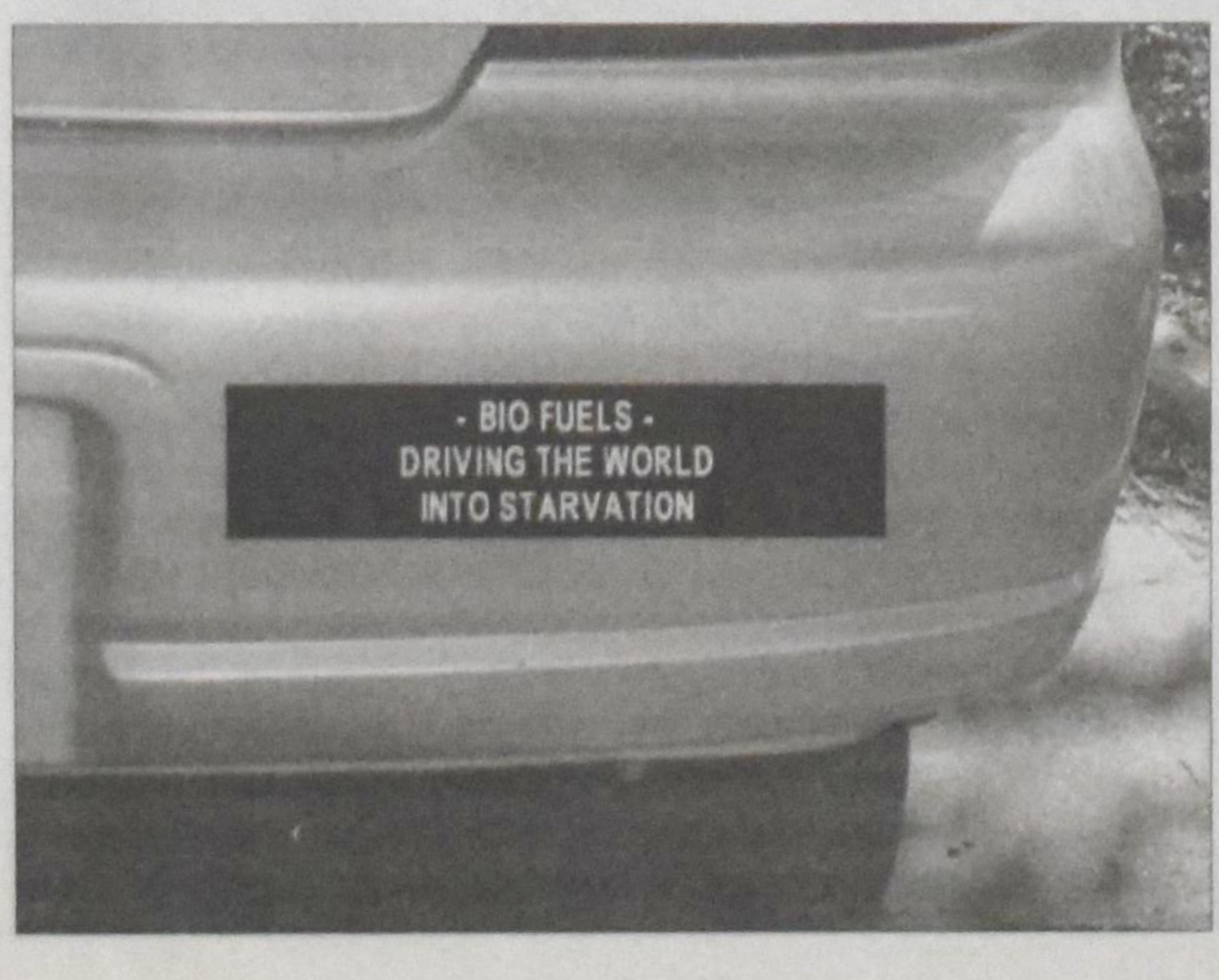
How big a factor is the biofuels boom?

It is significant enough for the FAO to be warning about the dangers of turning too much food into fuel, and for the Chinese government, for example, to ban the construction of new refineries that use corn or other basic foods. In fact, earlier this month Beijing announced tax breaks and subsidies to encourage the use of cellulose, sweet sorghum, and cassava (nonfood crops in China) for biofuels.

Some analysts estimate that as much as 30 percent of the US grain crop will go toward producing ethanol this year, a doubling from 2006. IFPRI forecasts that if the world sticks to current biofuel expansion plans, the price of corn will go up 26 percent by 2020, and the price of oilseeds (such as soybean, sunflower, rapeseed) by 18 percent. If governments double efforts to produce this alternative fuel source, corn prices are expected to go up 72 percent and oilseeds by 44 percent in 12 years' time.

Who gets hit hardest? Does anyone benefit?

As usual, it is the poorest people in the world who suffer most, because food takes up a bigger share of their daily shopping bill than it does for richer people. A family in Bangladesh, for example, living on $5 a day, typically spends $3 of that on food. The 50 percent rise in food prices the world has seen in recent years takes a $1.50 chunk – nearly 30 percent – out of the family budget.



Even farmers are not immune. On the whole, small-scale farmers in developing countries buy more food than they sell, so they, too, are net losers. Relatively few peasants have holdings large enough to benefit from price increases.

Big farmers in the rich countries, however, are doing well: US corn farmers have seen the price their crop fetches jump by 50 percent since 2000. Other net food exporters, such as India, Australia, and South Africa, will also do well out of rising prices. Major dairy producers, such as New Zealand, have done well as consumption of milk, yogurt, and cheese rises in Asia. As a result, while property values in New Zealand are generally expected to soften, flat rural land, where cows can graze, is expected to continue to rise in price, according to a survey by Massey University in New Zealand.

Will market forces correct the situation, as farmers switch to the high-earning crops?

Not as quickly as you might expect, though the European Union, the largest food exporter in the world, has suspended a "set-aside" program that had paid its farmers to leave 10 percent of their land fallow (so as to prevent oversupply).

Cereal prices are considered "inelastic," meaning that a 10 percent price increase tends to boost supplies by only one or two percentage points. While prices are high, they are also very volatile at the moment, which scares a lot of farmers off making the investments they would need to switch crops.

At the same time, the food market overlaps with the fuel market. Farmers can now sell their corn, their palm nuts, or their sugar to biodiesel refineries. So the price of palm oil, for example, traditionally the cheapest in Africa, is now set not by the cooking oil market, but by the fuel market.

It will not help that climate change and the accompanying floods and droughts may reduce cereal output in more than 40 developing countries, mainly in Africa, according to recent studies.

Where will food shortages be most acute?

Wherever the underlying trends of rising prices and scarcer supplies are compounded by special problems. Sometimes they are natural disasters, such as the cyclone and flooding that hit Bangladesh last November, wiping out many people's stocks of food. Sometimes they are man-made, as in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where continuing civil conflict and mismanagement disrupt the market, or in Zimbabwe, where inflation of more than 7,000 percent and a crumbling economy are threatening people already short of food.

"The hot spots of food risks will be where high prices combine with shocks from the weather or political crises," says Dr. von Braun. "These are recipes for disaster."

What effect will high prices have on hunger-prevention programs?

A big one says the World Food Program (WFP), the UN agency in charge of emergency food aid, which reported last year that food aid flows had reached their lowest levels since 1973.

Food prices "are an incredible concern for us at the moment" says WFP spokesman Robin Lodge. "The same dollars don't buy the same amount of food as they used to," and donations to the agency are flat.

The WFP has been making a big effort to buy food from countries as near as possible to crisis zones, to cut transport costs, and in 2007 it had 15 million fewer people to feed than in 2006 because there were fewer major emergencies.

"But we are now about as tight as we can get, so unless donations go up there is no doubt about it, we will have to reconsider who we are feeding and the rations," says Mr. Lodge. "There is no other way around it."

Many food aid organizations are trying to buy more food locally. The FAO is reportedly working on a program to offer poor farmers vouchers for seeds and fertilizer to help them adapt to changing climate conditions.